

Aeschylus Poulos

Production company(ies)

Hawkeye Pictures Inc.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Aeschylus Poulos is a Co-Founder of HAWKEYE PICTURES , an award winning producer of feature Films, documentaries and series. Hawkeye Pictures burst out of the gate executive producing SLEEPING GIANT (2015 Cannes Film Festival Semaine de la Critique), which garnered numerous national and international awards, including the Best Canadian First Feature at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival. Before Hawkeye's inception, Aeschylus co-produced Ruba Nadda's INESCAPABLE, starring ACADEMY AWARD® winner Marisa Tomei, and Kate Melville's Picture Day, with Sundance and EMMY® winner Tatiana Maslany in the lead. His production credits also include BLINDNESS by award winning director by Fernando Meirelles and OCTOBER GALE, starring Patricia Clarkson; and the seminal Canadian series SLINGS and ARROWS. Hawkeye's projects have been selected at prestigious international festivals including Cannes, TIFF, SXSW, Locarno, BFI London, Busan Clermont-Ferrand and Hot Docs.

In 2022, Hawkeye Pictures celebrated two premieres at TIFF: Sheila Pye's THE YOUNG ARSONISTS and Clement Virgo's BROTHER, the latter earning critical acclaim during its festival run and release and sweeping the Canadian Screen Awards with a record 12 wins including Best Motion Picture. Most recently BROTHER was also honored at the 2024 NAACPs winning Outstanding International Motion Picture and Outstanding Independent Film. The feature documentary MR. DRESSUP: THE MAGIC OF MAKE-BELIEVE clinched the People's Choice Documentary Award at TIFF2023 and went on to win 5 Canadian Screen Awards. The same year Hawkeye also launched several other projects, including award-winners VALLEY OF EXILE, QUEEN TUT and the co-production THE GRACELESS AGE. The television series FRUIT adapted by Pat Mills (DON'T TALK TO IRENE) from the novel by Brian Francis; the half hour comedy Fear of Flying by Kimberly Manky; and the limited series THE HONEY FARM, developed by Karen WALTON (ORPHAN BLACK) and to be directed by MARY NIGHY (ALICE, DARLING) are currently in development.

Hawkeye is committed to pushing boundaries and exploring different points of view. Upcoming projects include Sook-Yin Lee's (THE YEAR OF THE CARNIVORE) sex positive comedy-romance PAYING FOR IT, adapted from the best-selling novel by Chester Brown and premiering in the TIFF24Platform programme; Sarah Galea-Davis' female-led THE PLAYERS lensed by multi award-winning DOP Sara Mishara (TU DORS NICOLE, LES OISEAUX IVRES); Simon Ennis' documentary feature GIMME SOME TRUTH; and the four-part international documentary series WHO OWNS THE WORLD (PBS International). The

feature I'M NEVERMAN by TIFF, Sundance and Berlinale Talents Lab alumnus Rodrigo Barriuso is set for production Fall/Winter 2024.

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

IMDB LINK Aeschylus Poulos

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0693668/?ref=fn_al_nm_1

PAYING FOR IT (2024)

85 Comedy

Producer

TIFF 2024

THE PLAYERS (2024)

90 Drama

Producer

Game Theory Canada

MR. DRESSUP: The Magic of Make-Believe (2023)

90 Documentary

Producer

Theatrical (Prime Video 2023) – World Wide Toronto International Film Festival 2023 - Best Documentary People's Choice Award Atlantic Film Festival 2023 Vancouver International Film Festival 2023 Cinéfest Sudbury International Film Festival 2023 - Best Documentary Audience Choice Award Calgary International Film Festival - 2023 Forest City Film Festival 2023 Silver Wave Film Festival 2023 - Viewer's Choice Award Milton MFF 2024 Re-Frame Festival Peterborough 2024

THE GRACELESS AGE: The Ballad of John Murry (2023)

90 Documentary

Producer (Vortex Media)

Theatrical April 2024 SuperChannel Theatrical Ireland – NewDecade RTE Ireland BBC UK Galway Film Fleadh - Winner Best Irish Documentary IFI Documentary Festival Newport Beach Film Fest, Indie Memphis, KIFF, and Whistler Film Festival

VALLEY OF EXILE (2023)

106 Drama

Executive Producer (Game Theory)

Theatrical summer 2024 Cinequest Film Festival 2023 - Jury Award, Best Feature Drama Vancouver International Film Festival – Emerging Canadian Director Award Tallgrass Film

Festival Warsaw Film Festival Calgary Arab Nights Mostra Sao Paulo International Film Festival - Best Art Direction Windsor International Film Festival

BROTHER (2022)

118 Drama

Producer (Elevation)

2023 / 2024 Theatrical Broadcast Crave/CBC Netix USA Curzon UK Theatrical 2023 BBC UK TV 26 Spain, LatAm, TIFF2022, BFI London, Busan FF, Gotenburg, Tromso, Munich FF, FlnAtlantic, Vancouver Intl FF, Toronto Film Critics Association Best Film Nominee, Vancouver Film Critics Association Best Film, Best Director, TIFF Canada's TOP 10, Chicago Film Critics Festival, 2023 Winner 12 Canadian Screen Awards including Best Picture. Four nominations at the 55th NAACP Image Awards including Outstanding: Independent Motion Picture, International Motion Picture, Breakthrough Performance in a Motion Picture (Aaron Pierre), and Cinematography in a Feature Film (Guy Godfree)

THE YOUNG ARSONISTS (2022)

93 Drama

Producer (Game Theory)

Theatrical 2023 Broadcast CRAVE 2023 Game Theory / Vertical USA 2024 Theatrical TIFF2022, FIN Atlantic, Tallin Black Nights, Cairo FF, Goa FF, Santa Barbara

PROPAGANDA: The Art of Selling lies (2019)

93 Documentary Feature

Producer (D Films/Hawkeye)

Theatrical 2019 Sold to 35 Territories Broadcast TVO 2019 Hot Docs 2019 , Doxa 2019

THE LONG RIDER (2021)

96 Documentary Feature Film

Executive Producer Super Channel Various Can and International

MY TREE (2021)

105 Documentary Producer (Hawkeye)

Theatrical 2021 Broadcast CBC Level 33 USA Theatrical / TV Hot Docs 2021, FIN 2021, Cinefest Sudbury 2021, Toronto Jewish FF 2021, Palestinian FF 2021, Ottawa FF 2021, Victoria FF 2021 CSA Best Editing WIN 2021 CSA Nominated Best Documentary 2021

TITO (2019)

75 Feature Executive Producer

2019 Theatrical / Crave Visit Films – USA SXSW 2019 - Adam Yauch Hörnblowér Award (Winner), Maryland FF 2019, Cork IFF 2019 - Spirit of the Festival (Nominee) Melbourne

IFF 2019, Oldenburg IFF 2019 - Independence Award (Winner), Vancouver IFF 2019, Torino FF 2019

PROJECT ITHACA (2019)

84 SCI-FI Executive Producer (Raven Banner)
Theatrical 2020

MARY GOES ROUND (2017)

84 Drama Executive Producer

2015, Theatrical Crave AMAZON PRIME WORLD WIDE SALE ex Canada TIFF 2017, Edmonton IFF 2017, Cinefest Sudbury 2017, Santa Barbara IFF - Panavision Independent Cinema 2018 (Winner), VictoriaFF 2018, Kingston Canadian FF 2018, Miami FF - Jordan Sessler Screenwriting Competition 2018, Omaha FF 2018, Vail FF 2018 - Winner, Best Narrative Feature, Annapolis FF 2018 - Best Narrative Feature (Winner), Cleveland International FF, Bentonville FF, Shanghai IFF, Beijing IFF

22 CHASER (2018)

87 Thriller/ Drama Producer

2018 Theatrical CAN Gravatis USA Writers Guild of Canada - Best Feature Screenplay (Winner Jeremy Boxen), Canadian Film Festival, Polish Film Festival, Canadian Cinema Editors Nomination

SLEEPING GIANT (2015)

89 Drama Producer

2016 Released CAN, USA, FRANCE, KOREA, GERMANY, UK, SCANDI, LatAM, North Africa, HBO Europe Cannes, Critics Week 2015, Ghent International Film Festival 2015 (Winner Explore Award), Mumbai Film Festival 2015 (Special Jury Mention), Munich Film Festival 2015 (Winner CineVision Award), Palm Springs International Film Festival 2015, Reykjavik International Film Festival 2015 (FIPRESCI Prize - Special Mention), RiverRun International Film Festival 2016 (Winner Jury Prize), Athens International Film Festival 2015, TIFF (Winner Best Canadian First Feature Film), Vancouver Film Critics Circle 2015 (Winner VFCC Award), Zurich Film Festival 2015, Toronto Film Critics Association Awards, Canadian Screen Awards, Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role - Nick Serino (Winner)

NATASHA (2015)

93 Drama Executive Producer

Upon request, TIFF premiere ++

OCTOBER GALE (2014)

91 Thriller, Drama Co-producer
Theatrical US/CANADA/UK TIFF premiere ++

MOLLY MAXWELL (2012)
90 Drama Producer
Theatrical US/CANADA MOMA/ IFC ++

INESCAPABLE (2012)
93 Mystery, Thriller Co-producer
Theatrical US/CANADA/UK TIFF premiere ++

PICTURE DAY (2012)
93 Comedy, Drama Co-Producer
Theatrical US/CANADA/UK TIFF premiere ++

THE BASTARD SINGS THE SWEETEST SONG (2012)
90 Documentary Associate Producer
Upon request, IFTA/ TIFF +++

BLINDNESS
100 Drama Associate Producer
Worldwide Theatrical/Broadcast Opening night Cannes TIFF and Worldwide Film Festivals ++

BOOK OF NEGROES (2015)
6 x 1 hr TV series Drama Co Producer
Broadcast Television 2015 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Writing in a Motion Picture (Television). Multiple CSA awards: Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Dramatic Program or Mini-Series, Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Supporting Role in a Dramatic Program or Series, Canadian Screen Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Dramatic Program or Mini-Series, Best Writing in a Dramatic Program or Limited Series, Best Costume Design, Best Limited Series or Program, Best Sound, Fiction, Best Production Design or Art Direction in a Fiction Program or Series, Best Direction in a Dramatic Program or Limited Series, Best Original Music Score for a Program.

MY 90 YEAR OLD ROOMATE
10 x 8 min Webisodes Comedy Executive Producer
Digital CBC 2016

LITTLE FILMS ABOUT BIG MOMENTS
TV Movie Drama Supervising Producer
Broadcast CBC. BET

TRIPLE SENSATION
Season 1 TV Mini series 360 min
Drama Associate Producer
Broadcast 2007

SLINGS AND ARROWS
Season 2,3 60 min Tv series Drama/Comedy Associate Producer
Broadcast Canada, USA, UK, EUROPE, BRAZIL 2003

Name of qualifying feature film
PAYING FOR IT

Expected release date in 2024:
September 6th 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:
Toronto International Film Festival - Platform Program 2024 * then Canadian festival run, then theatrical, then Crave & then CBC 2nd window after that.

Film synopsis

Paying For It is a live-action adaptation of acclaimed alternative-cartoonist Chester Brown's best-selling graphic novel. In the late 90s, Chester and Sonny are a long-term, committed, romantic couple. When Sonny wants to redefine their relationship, Chester, an introverted cartoonist, starts sleeping with sex workers and discovers a new kind of intimacy in the process. Paying For It is a work of cinematic auto-fiction, a comedy that is a kind of double-act of portraiture. Sook-Yin Lee, Chester Brown's real-life ex, adapts his graphic novel memoir into a uniquely compassionate movie, especially in its handling of sex and intimacy.

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

I want to make films that are entertaining, that explore themes that I find interesting and that are uniquely Canadian. I grew up in and around Kensington Market, a real community, and was aware of Chester Brown's work as well as Sook-Yin's. The chance to make an adaptation of the graphic novel, with a group of artists in the city I grew up in, seemed to me like a good way to spend my professional time and energy. I think the fact this film was made with love, comes through when you watch it. And that has been a really important component of my projects as time goes on. I don't say that being flippant, but rather I believe that if you are producing these totally independent feature films you have to love them, give them everything, it's not just about making money or content for broadcasters.

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

I have been a mentor at the Canadian Film Centre since the 2010's and one of my mentees was my now friend and colleague Matt Code. I was the EP on his first Feature Film, the micro-budget Mary Goes Round - Molly McGlynn's breakout directing debut. After knowing one another for years Matt and I had been seeking another lm to collaborate on. After some time developing the script and getting the option from Chester Brown, Matt brought Hawkeye on as a partner, and together we created the model and raised the financing on the film. Our greatest challenge was that we made this film very indie and very low budget, but with the whole crew buying into the ethos and the model, we were able to shoot the 20 days in downtown Toronto, mostly in Kensington Market, and never do overtime. I mention this because shooting Canadian films in downtown Toronto has become a real challenge as we fight the inflationary cost of filmmaking the US service content has made operating as independent all Canadian features an even greater challenge. But we had a true indie lm hero in Sook-Yin, and a dedicated team of artists around her, who collaborated with passion and hard work to make this period piece adaptation a success. It was great fun to work with this young energetic crew and artists all working together to fulfill Sook-Yin's vision. In some ways isn't that the dream? The other challenge was... the RATS, there were so so many rats in Kensington Market it was somewhat unsettling!

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

The slogan for my company Hawkeye Pictures probably says it all or at least a lot: fiercely independent. Though I started out in the American film and television service industry, and learned A LOT from some amazing artists and technicians, I also always nurtured a deep desire to work on homegrown projects; to be part of a domestic industry and to help build and grow it. When I started working on shows like Rhombus' Slings & Arrows and Blindness, I decided I eventually wanted to also generate and

contribute to the actualization of legacy Canadian feature film projects. That's when work stopped being just a job and started feeling like a vocation. For this reason I have and continue to work with emerging creatives as well as more established ones, and I always have something to strive for. As some know well that's what drives me to lobby and work with our funders, our policy makers, our vendors suppliers, our unions, our industry, to work together to create a strong industry that is not only functioning to service the American industry and talent, but also and especially to make fiercely independent, bold, trailblazing work that celebrates diverse perspectives, artistic bravery, and the joy of making movies by Canadians for home and abroad. I sleep and eat the job of producing independent Canadian content, we don't service produce for money, we sacrifice for great Canadian stories.

What defines your body of work?

I feel so very fortunate to be a producer, that is my chosen vocation and I've worked tirelessly to make original Independent Canadian content for audiences at home and around the world, for a living. In my time, in different capacities, starting out as a production assistant and working my way up , I have been part of over 40+ feature films and in spite of the ups and down of this particular sector of the industry, I still love it (Mind you I'd love it even more with a \$20,000 boost, but I digress...) I believe how you produce, how you collaborate, how you crew and cast is of the utmost importance and central to how I've produced films. I take this seriously by trying to lead with a vision of how things should work. When looking back at a career I hope one not only considers the films that make up the "body of work" but also how these films were produced, what they gave back to the community, what careers, ideas and conversations they sparked. Can we create an opportunity to tell a particular story from a different voice or perspective or show another way of thinking about something, as we try to build a better industry for future generations? Are we telling stories by and for Canadians that resonate, but also entertain and tap into something universal? Nationalism can be a very scary thing but I think cultural nationalism for a small country, next to a "super power" is a very important part of defining who we are, how we understand our past, while planning our future.

This September marks our fourth film playing TIFF in the last three years, and the past six years have been incredibly busy and challenging but also very fulfilling. In 2022 I was thrilled to help the wonderful visual artist Sheila Pye bring her directorial debut to the screen. The film played TIFF22 and went on to play international festivals and glean distribution in Europe and the US. Sheila played with notions of destruction and creation and reminded me what making art is all about. I was so moved by David Chariandy's novel Brother when I first read it – it really encapsulated for me the type of project that should be produced – a sensational novel by a wonderful Canadian author that

resonated around the world. Bringing it to the screen and collaborating with Conquering Lion on it has been quite simply an honour. It premiered at TIFF22 and after a great festival run, went on to win 12 CSAs and win 2 NAACP awards (nominated for 4). But more important than the awards, Brother is a project that I hope will continue to draw interest from readers and viewers and a film that I hope will find a place in the canon of Canadian cinema (as one journalist suggested ☺). Last year Mr. Dressup: The Magic of Make Believe played TIFF23 and went onto win the TIFF People's Choice Documentary Audience award and 5 CSAs. This project reminded me of the incredible power of shared experience and again of making films with enthusiasm and heart. This year I am excited to premiere Sook-Yin Lee's adaptation of Chester Brown's graphic novel Paying For It in the Platform program at TIFF 24. I hope it gives a raucous glimpse into the scrappy, indie, thrifty Toronto of the 1990's, while making people think about notions of relationships, intimacy and love. The documentary My Tree gave me the chance to work on a thought-provoking film about the path to reconciliation and understanding, with the great wordsmith Jason Sherman. I was so moved by the last scene of the film and it's something I still think about often, especially in these troubled times.

As a producer bringing Canadian content and talent to the global stage I also recognize the great opportunity offered by co-productions with other countries. I have been fortunate to collaborate on a number of co-pros like the Irish/Canada project the Graceless Age: The Ballad of John Murry which won the best film at Galway International 2023 and has played internationally, and released in 2024; or the Canada/Germany 4-part documentary series Who Owns The World (PBS International) which will premiere in Canada this fall. These projects allow me to explore different parts of the world, different problems and points of view and also highlight for me all the things that tie us all together, and these stand out much more prominently for me than those that can tear us apart.

As an established producer I am well aware that a new generation (actually generations plural by now) that are forging new paths in the industry. I am excited to try to do my part and help the new wave succeed and push the limits of our craft. For this reason I actively Executive Produce projects with teams I believe in, like the Lebanese / Canadian Film Valley of Exile directed by Anna Fahr, shot in a refugee camp in Lebanon, and which won best 1st feature film at VIFF23 and has played over 20 festivals across the globe, winning notable awards in San Paulo, Warsaw and Shanghai. Or Grace Glowiki's strange and boldly beautiful film Tito which premiered at SXSW21 winning the breakout filmmaker award. Or again, the Fae Pictures film Queen Tut, starring the inspiring CSA nominated Alexandra Billings, and made by a team that is actively trying to break down barriers in the industry. I have been so fortunate to work with these teams and be part of their journey as a filmmaker mentor and executive producer.

And I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my first project under the official fiercely independent Hawkeye banner: Andrew Cividino and Karen Harnisch's feature film *Sleeping Giant*, which premiered at Cannes Semaine de la Critique, won Best First feature at TIFF15 and made quite simple made waves. When that project came across my desk I was working at a company and had a solid salary. But it was the undeniable excitement that grew within me, knowing immediately this team would create something great, that propelled me to leave what I was doing and follow what I have already defined for as my vocation. I hope I never lose that excitement and desire to continue to make, collaborate and produce. I tell you...it's s the stuff of life.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

In the 25 years I've been part of the industry, I've experienced both rewards and challenges and had my share of peaks and valleys. But I feel fortunate to consider myself a "lifer" in this field. My career has spanned various roles—from working on blockbusters and independent films to contributing to award-winning television shows. Along the way I gained valuable experience at esteemed companies like Rhombus Media, Foundry Films, and Blue Ice Pictures and was fortunate to learn the ropes from a variety of excellent producers and humans. I have gained some experience and wisdom along the way and, while I am still always learning, I am also eager to share and give back. While Executive Producing allows me to contribute experience to forming companies and talents, I also volunteer with the CMPA and sit on committees to remain active and engaged with the industry at the policy level. I believe that doing the sometimes painfully slow policy work, union negotiations and work on the feature film committee is a way to put the time in to affect change and create a better industry ecosystem. I also guest lecture, when afforded the opportunity, at post-secondary schools like York University, Metropolitan University, The University of Ohio, the CFC. I love to chat with an engaged group of young people who want to tell stories and make movies.

Beyond my passion for film and television, I've been a lifelong student of policy and a political enthusiast. Starting at the young age of 14, when I volunteered for my first political campaign, I've consistently advocated for a more just society. I'm unafraid to speak truth to power and am acutely aware of the challenges our industry, our communities, and our country face in these uncertain times. I dedicate my time and attention to current governance, conflicts and debates in our industry and those outside of our industry that influence it. The collective joy of creating content through vision, hard work, and teamwork keeps me continually engaged and eager to learn new things. I pride myself on being fiercely independent yet highly collaborative.

As I often like to remind people, my name is long, full of consonants and vowels, and easily recognizable, and as an Independent Producer who does NOT service produce ... I could really use this prize money. :) Thank you for your consideration.

Allison Duke

Production company(ies)

OYA Media Group, Goldelox Productions

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Allison Duke is an accomplished writer/producer/director with a two-decade track record in storytelling. Her first feature, "Raising Kane: A Rapumentary" gained acclaim at the Urbanworld Film Festival in NYC, winning the HBO award for best documentary and setting the stage for her career. She served as a segment producer for City TV's syndicated unscripted series (40 x 1/2hr yearly). Alison's achievements include collaborating on projects with luminaries like Bruce McDonald; empowering the global HIV community through her films; co-founding the innovative production company OYA Media Group; winning two CSA's for "Mr. Jane and Finch"; directing the narrative short "Promise Me"; and co-creating the five-part unscripted series "Black Community Mixtapes" for City TV. She recently wrapped an unscripted 3 part series on music industry injustices for Idris Elba's Green Door Pictures. She co-produced and co-wrote the feature doc 'A Mother Apart,' which earned a top 3 audience votes at Hot Docs 2024 and top awards at the Inside Out film festival including best feature. Her new Crave Original music doc, "Bam Bam: the Sister Nancy Story" premiered at Tribeca Festival 2024. Always one to give back, Alison mentors up-and-coming creatives through OYA Black Arts Coalition and has sustained her position as an industry leader. Alison is a 2019 WIFT-Toronto Crystal awardee for mentorship and won the Hot Docs 2024 Don Haig award.

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

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0241165/>

Name of qualifying feature film

Bam Bam: The Sister Nancy Story

Expected release date in 2024:

June 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:

Tribeca Film Festival

Film synopsis

While following Sister Nancy on a stretch of her tour from Toronto to London to LA, the film explores her journey as an artist from humble beginnings in Kingston 6, Jamaica, to how 'Bam Bam,' her iconic recording, became the most sampled reggae vocal-- despite receiving no royalties.

Following the murder of her producer, Mr. Winston Riley, Sister Nancy discovers his deceit, and demands her rightful share of his estate. Eventually settling for past royalties and a 50/50 split going forward, she leaves her bank job to tour full-time.

Featuring interviews with industry figures like Janelle Monae, Young Guru, Pete Rock, Main Source, Rene Neufville (from Zhane), Queen Ifrica, Tony Rebel, and DJ Red Alert, the film contextualizes Sister Nancy's everlasting prominence in reggae and hip hop to create a comprehensive, colourful portrait of her journey.

This fun, inspirational documentary showcases Sister Nancy's resilience through dynamic tour performances, interviews, archival footage, and dramatizations. In an industry notorious for silencing female artists, Sister Nancy is hell-bent on empowering others with her music and knowledge to make a difference—proving that good music can't be stopped!

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

The film celebrates the resilience, talent, and cultural impact of a Black woman who has defied industry norms and societal expectations. Sister Nancy's journey from relative anonymity to becoming a prominent figure in hip-hop and dancehall music underscores the power of her voice. Her influence, particularly through innovative sampling, has left an indelible mark on the music landscape, showcasing her enduring relevance and artistic prowess.

The film also serves as a testament to Sister Nancy's refusal to be sidelined by age or gender norms within the music industry. Despite societal pressures that often marginalize older female musicians, Sister Nancy continues to tour vigorously and evolve creatively. Her story challenges stereotypes and demonstrates that talent and determination transcend conventional boundaries. By documenting her life and achievements, the film not only preserves her legacy but also inspires audiences to recognize and celebrate the contributions of women in music, especially those who have historically been overlooked or underestimated.

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

It came together through a convergence of personal passion for music, professional experience in documentary filmmaking, and a deep respect for Sister Nancy's cultural impact. As a former music journalist and video producer deeply rooted in the Canadian music scene, I transitioned into documentary filmmaking with a strong foundation in understanding the power of music as a narrative force. My previous collaborations, including work with Director X in Toronto, provided me with invaluable experience in visual storytelling and capturing the essence of musical legends.

Her journey to prominence in the hip-hop and dancehall genres fascinated me and her vocal prowess is a magnet, drawing audiences from varied backgrounds, proving her universal appeal and cultural significance. Capturing her resilience and artistic evolution on screen was a rewarding process, showcasing her unwavering dedication to her craft despite industry biases against aging female musicians.

The challenges were significant as well. Sister Nancy gave me two orders on the very first day of film. The first was to not ask her to do anything over again. For example, if she walked into a room, or showed me a photo, don't ask her to do another take because she is a woman who lives in the moment and doesn't care if something looks raw or rough. The second task was that I was not allowed to ask her the same question twice either. Most documentary filmmakers would have thrown their hands up but I dug into these challenges to make what I believe is a magical, thoughtful and entertaining film. Other challenges were securing archival footage in a community where most of the people who produced it are either no longer around or no longer have the master files. I did manage to find a Canadian photographer Beth Lesser and her partner David Kingston, a reggae journalist and radio personality who documented Sister Nancy in the 80s. It was wonderful to capture their show and tell of their photographic and audio archives of sister nancy.

Securing interviews that authentically captured Sister Nancy's impact in music required meticulous research and negotiation. We had to find people who sampled her and discovered that Main Source, part Canadian and part USA group who had Caribbean backgrounds were the first to sample Sister Nancy's voice.

I also wanted to make a film that balanced the narrative between celebrating her achievements and addressing the systemic barriers faced by Black women in the music industry. I feel my background as a social justice filmmaker allowed me to provide that sensitivity through contextualization. Lastly, filming the other musicians who collaborated on the iconic track "Bam Bam" was difficult as we needed to follow the path to answers without stoking conflict that could end very important discussions. The scene helped to create a beautiful friendship between Sister Nancy and these musicians and they continue to perform together today.

Our sold out world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival (filling the 540 seat Indeed Theatre) was a huge triumph for the film and our company. The buzz and reviews at the festival was completely amazing and I am proud to have one of three Canadian films be represented at the festival.

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

As a Canadian film producer, I am committed to telling stories that reflect Canada's diverse cultural landscape. I embrace this richness by seeking out narratives that highlight the experiences of marginalized communities. One aspect that sets me apart is my dedication to fostering international collaborations while maintaining a distinctly Canadian perspective.

Canada's multicultural identity allows me to bridge different cultures and viewpoints, creating films that resonate both locally and globally. I want to show Canada's contributions to the world in all facets of society and art. This global outlook enriches my productions with a unique blend of perspectives, making them relevant and impactful across borders.

Moreover, as a Canadian producer, I am part of a supportive and collaborative film industry known for its innovation and creativity. Canada's robust funding programs and infrastructure support independent filmmakers like myself in bringing diverse stories to the screen. I leverage these resources to ensure my productions meet high standards of quality while staying true to their authentic Canadian roots.

What defines your body of work?

My body of work is defined by a deep commitment to intersectionality of race, gender, cultural background and sexuality to amplify marginalized voices. I strive to tell stories that challenge stereotypes, dismantle barriers, and celebrate the rich diversity of human experiences. My productions are characterized by a deliberate focus on representing narratives that are often overlooked or misunderstood, offering nuanced portrayals that resonate with audiences on personal and societal levels. This dedication extends to fostering inclusive production environments where diverse perspectives contribute to the creative process.

In addition to authenticity, I uphold a standard of excellence for every project. I believe in the power of media to inspire empathy, provoke thought, and catalyze social change. Through my productions, I aim to challenge norms, broaden perspectives, and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable entertainment industry and society at large.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

At OYA Media Group we have an unwavering commitment to authenticity, impact, and excellence in storytelling. We set ourselves apart by consistently striving for the highest standards of quality and professionalism in every project we undertake. Our approach is not just about meeting expectations but pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved, delivering outstanding productions that resonate globally.

Central to our mission is celebrating and amplifying the power of Black experiences through storytelling. We are deeply connected to our community and recognize the importance of telling their stories authentically and with respect. This commitment has led us to establish the OYA Black Art Coalition (OBAC), a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Black artists, creators, and entrepreneurs in the entertainment industry. OBAC serves as a platform for empowerment and change, ensuring that Black voices are not only heard but celebrated and valued in the industry.

Andrew Bronfman

Production company(ies)

Good Movies Inc.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Andrew Bronfman is a Toronto based film producer specializing in structuring, financing, and producing domestic and international co-productions.

Andrew co-produced several features including 'Delia's Gone', 'The Kid Detective', 'Run This Town', 'James VS His Future Self', 'Die in a Gunfight' and 'Big Gold Brick'. He also produced 'My Animal', which premiered at Sundance 2023 and 'Mustache' which premiered at SXSW 2023. His upcoming films 'The Burning Season', and 'The Silent Planet' are both in post-production. Andrew received his Bachelor of Arts from McGill University before attending the conservatory program at the New York Film Academy.

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

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm7691468/>

Name of qualifying feature film

The Silent Planet

Expected release date in 2024:

Q4 2024

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

Theatrical

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

Quiver Distribution

Film synopsis

An aging convict serving out a life sentence alone on a distant planet is forced to confront his past when a new prisoner shows up and pushes him to remember his life on earth.

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

This was an important film to make in order to showcase the abilities and talents of a predominantly Canadian cast and crew, as well as to exhibit the beautiful landscape of Newfoundland, Canada.

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

One of the major highlights was working with an incredibly talented cast and crew. It was an honour to work with Elias Koteas, an experienced and distinguished Canadian actor, and it was incredibly gratifying to help form the vision of director Jeffrey St. Jules.

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

I have had over ten years of experience in the Canadian film industry, and have worked to produce a multitude of Canadian Content and Service productions filmed in Ontario and all over the country. The films I have worked on have provided a number of jobs to Canadian industry professionals, provided learning experiences for newer members of the film industry, and have helped to strengthen the local and national economy as well as the prevalence of Canadian films worldwide.

What defines your body of work?

My body of work is defined by a multitude of feature films, as a co-producer, a service producer, and a lead producer.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I feel as though I am a leader in Canadian independent production, as I have actively been bringing service productions to Ontario and creating opportunities for local professionals in the film industry.

Avi Federgreen

Production company(ies)

Federgreen Entertainment Inc.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Avi Federgreen's thirty years of experience in the Canadian film industry includes over seventy films produced.

Federgreen also is the creator of the Indiecan10K & Indiecan20K First Feature Initiatives that have now helped 8 first features get made in Canada.

Federgreen's producing credits include Home Free, One Week, Still Mine, Motherly, For The Sake of Vicious, Clapboard Jungle, Things I Do For Money, Kiss and Cry, Prisoner X, Score: A Hockey Musical, Relative Happiness, How To Plan An Orgy in A Small Town, Moon Point, I'm Yours, Hungry Hills, High Life, Leslie, My Name Is Evil, Lifechanger, Man Running, and Altered Skin to name a few.

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

As I have produced over 70+ features I am including my IMDB Link

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0270098/?ref=fn_al_nm_1

Name of qualifying feature film

HOME FREE

Expected release date in 2024:

Fall 2024 in CDN Film Festivals

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:

Indiecan Entertainment Inc.

Film synopsis

Herb (Art Hindle) and Audry (Jill Frappier) have had a near perfect relationship for over fifty years. This anniversary Herb has a few surprises in store for his three estranged daughters; Rain (Michelle Nolden) the eldest, Ivy (Tara Spencer-Nairn), the middle child, and Daisy (Natalie Brown), the youngest. Herb, having recently been diagnosed with a fatal brain tumour, announces that he is choosing to die on his own terms and is not seeking treatment. Not only that, but he wants to spend his remaining days getting to know his daughters inner most secrets and finding a way to clear the air between the three.

As the daughters grapple with one another and wrestle their own demons, their father's condition worsens, and Audry realizes that she's not ready to say goodbye to her true love. What should be a weekend celebration of life slowly turns into a darker reality as all five family members are forced to look at themselves in ways they never have before. Truth will bring them together, home will set them free.

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

HOME FREE is very similar in tone to many other films I have produced over the years like ONE WEEK, STILL MINE and KISS & CRY to name a few. My preference as a filmmaker is to make films based on a true story or could have been based on a true story type of films. Ones that can affect change. The three films that I have mentioned about were those type of films and they did in fact had a huge impact on the audiences that have watched these films over the years. The power that we have as filmmakers to help affect audiences lives for the better is in my heart what my main goal is. People that have lost someone to Cancer, Alzheimer's, or have been affected by in some way, whatever the case maybe, we as story tellers need to take these difficult issues and tell stories that can bring light and help people to take things head on to affect change in their lives for the better!

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

About 8-9 years ago the script was brought to me by the writer with the idea that I would produce the film. We worked on the script for about a year and could not get it to a place that we were both happy with it so she and I walked away from the project and she shelved it.

In 2019 after producing and directing a short film (my first directing work) I was hooked on the idea of directing a film that was like many of the important films i had produced previously. The script HOME FREE immediately came to mind and I reached out to the writer to see if the rights were still available. They were and I convinced her to let me direct it and to work with me to fix the script. After a number of months working on the script we were both happy with where we landed on the script and held an online table

read with actors who I knew were the perfect actors to play the characters should I get the film financed. The table read was held online during the beginnings of COVID in May 2020. There was not a dry eye at the end of the Table Read. I felt that it was the best script I have ever read in 30+ years as did the cast that participated.

The next two years were spent applying to Telefilm and others for funding and were turned down every time. I thought the dream of making this film which I had said that if I was only going to get the opportunity to make one last film in my life this was the film I wanted to make was dead.

The day after I received the last rejection email (Summer 2022) from Telefilm I got a call from my Father-In-Law who said that he believed in me and in the project and offered to finance the whole film.

HOME FREE became a REALITY!

We were to make the film for a very small budget and needed to work on the script to be able to make it for the financing we had and we only had a limited amount of time to make this happen. I collaborated with my team to assemble a great crew of people that I had worked with on many prior films who were in my mind the best of the best and also brought on 4 of the 6 main actors for the film and were also part of the table read. The mission was to collaborate between the key cast, Key Crew, Writer and me to ensure we had the BEST script possible and achievable for our limited budget. Our lead actress Michelle Nolden offered her beautiful 1800 house in Paris Ontario as the location for the film and on March 27th, 2023 we began filming HOME FREE in a total of 17 shoot days. A DREAM COME TRUE! From January 1st when we were in Pre-Production to the end of editing the film was a complete collaboration with Cast, Key Crew, to ensure that we made the best film in our minds and hearts and we all believe we did!

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

For those who know me in the industry I have been solely working on Canadian film and TV projects since the early 2000's and since that day have not made a non-CDN film. Some have called me the Canadian Indie Film Guy, Captain Canada and a host of other titles. I have spent most of my career fighting to make and help make Canadian Films Possible. I have taught over 2000+ aspiring filmmakers across the country my Indie Producing Seminar and I organized an Indiecan 10K and Indiecan 20K initiatives which I raised over \$1M in in-kind sponsorship to help 8 first time feature filmmakers from 6 different provinces realize their dream to make and release their first films. I was involved in all aspects of development, production, post production and release. I believe in our talent in Canada and have done everything possible to encourage and help the future filmmakers of tomorrow. If we don't help the future filmmakers of tomorrow there will be no future.

What defines your body of work?

I have produced over 70+ features as a Producer or Executive Producer capacity. It should be noted that I never put my name on a film as an EP unless I was deeply involved in the making of the film from development through to release. My legacy are my films and my children and I have never regretted making a single film and would make them again. My work can be defined as films that can either affect change to those watching them or also films that I would love to watch myself and share with my friends. Being in the industry was never about fame or fortune as if I was in the business for the money I would have gotten out a long time ago. I am proud of my body of work and wouldn't change a thing and the relationships that I have made through the making of these films leave me full for the rest of my life.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I think as a leader you need to make yourself available to the future filmmakers of tomorrow. I have met with so many indie filmmakers in my career over coffee or zoom to answer their questions, give advice, read their scripts and comment on them, share my wealth of contacts and experience in order to help them, as much as possible. I was fortunate enough to be mentored in the early days by some of the BEST Canadian Producers around. People like Marilyn Stonehouse, Patrick Whitley, Moira Holmes, and Steve Wakefield to name a few. They gave of themselves to share their knowledge and experience with me and I have always felt that I needed to pass that on to the next generation of filmmakers and I felt that I have and will continue to do so.

Kyle Irving, Lisa Meeches, Rebecca Gibson

Production company(ies)

Eagle Vision

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Lisa Meeches:

Member of the Order of Canada and Order of Manitoba, Lisa Meeches is one of the most dynamic and respected producers in the film industry and is Anishinaabe from Long Plain First Nation, Sandy Bay First Nation, and Ebb and Flow First Nation. After studying broadcasting in North Dakota, Lisa began her career in 1986 with the Native Media Network. She later began news reporting for Craig Broadcasting Systems in Manitoba and Alberta, where she established a liaison team that connected the newsroom with surrounding First Nations communities. Her journalism career recently came full circle with a Beyond Borders Media Award for her work on Taken as co-creator, executive producer, and host. Lisa also directs episodes of the series and has been nominated for two Canadian Screen Awards for Taken (Best Factual Series, Best Cross-Platform Project).

Lisa has produced numerous projects to critical acclaim including The Sharing Circle, Canada's longest-running Indigenous television series; Ice Road Truckers; Tipi Tales, a Parent's Choice award-winning children's series; and Elijah, a Gemini Award-winning MOW; and the 3-times nominated 2-time winner of CSA's Jack. She Executive Produced the 4-time CSA nominee and 2-time winner We Were Children, is widely praised by residential school survivors for its power to heal, while general audiences have been moved by its accurate and truthful portrayal of the impacts of Canada's colonial past. Prior to this project, Lisa travelled the country with her team interviewing residential school survivors about their experiences for the Legacy of Hope project. Lisa was also the Director, Events Planning and Artistic Programming for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Most recently Lisa served as Creative Director/Executive Producer for the National MMIWG Inquiry. Her work was honoured with two gold medals at the international Shorty Awards for excellence in social media. Lisa is Co- Executive Producer on the CBC/eOne/CW series Burden of Truth (four seasons), and was executive producer of Night Raiders written and directed by Danis Goulet She recently executive produced the feature films Diaspora, and Finality of Dusk, and Deaner '89 set to release in 2024.

Lisa has been critical to the success of the Manito Ahbee Festival since its inception more than 15 years ago where she has acted in the capacity of board chair on a volunteer basis until stepping down to assume the role of Executive Director. True to her

heritage, Lisa is a renowned champion fancy shawl dancer. Lisa is Executive Producer of Orange Daisy Project, a social action campaign in support of mental health for teen girls. Among her numerous awards and nominations are: the 2007 National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Media & Communication, the 2009 YMCA-YWCA Woman of Distinction Award in the area of Creative Communications, the University of Manitoba's Excellence in Aboriginal Business Leadership Award, the Women in Film and Television 2009 Crystal Award for Mentorship, and Ms. Chatelaine. Lisa was honoured as a 2020 Trailblazer at the Reelworld Film Festival.

Kyle Irving:

Kyle Irving, an Emmy-winning producer, co-owner, partner, and head of production for Eagle Vision, has produced over 300 hours of film and television content in the past 24 years. His recent feature film credits include *Bones of Crows* (2022), *Orphan: First Kill* (2022), and *Night Raiders* (2021).

Other notable projects produced by Kyle include Deco Dawson's feature *Diaspora* and Madison Thomas's *Finality of Dusk*. His credits also include the Oscar-winning and Best Picture-nominated *Capote*, the seminal *We Were Children*, *Blue State*, *Walk All Over Me*, *Reasonable Doubt*, and *Lovesick*. Kyle's executive producer credits in television include *True Story* (Parts One and Two) for The History Channel, *SkyMed* for Paramount+, CBC, and CBS Studios, Snapchat's first original Canadian series *Reclaim(ed)*, four seasons of *Burden of Truth* for CBC, CW, Hulu, and Universal UK, the iconic international hit factual series *Ice Road Truckers* for The History Channel and AETN, the comedy series *DJ Burnt Bannock* for APTN Lumi, the docuseries *7TH GEN* for APTN, and four seasons of the hugely impactful cold case crime series *TAKEN* for APTN and CBC.

Kyle has been a dedicated ally to the Indigenous community, working with his business partner Lisa Meeches for nearly 25 years, and focuses on championing underrepresented talent. He served as the creative director and executive producer of the #sacredMMIWG campaign and the National Closing Event for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls from 2018-2019, reaching one-third of all Canadians. In recognition of his contributions, he was named to the Order of Manitoba in 2021, the province's highest honor.

Rebecca Gibson:

As a writer, director, producer, series creator, story editor and actor, Rebecca's work in documentary, drama, and comedy has played in festivals, in theatres, and on TV screens around the world. Following graduation from the New York Film Academy, a CFTPA International Internship took Rebecca to Los Angeles at the start of her film career. Credits include her ACTRA Award-winning role in *The Pinkertons* (Netflix); her Blizzard Award-winning role in the film that launched the series *The Murdoch Mysteries*; co-writing and producing the award-winning feature *H&G*; serving as co-creator, executive

producer, showrunner, a writer, and director for four seasons of the series *Taken*, for which she won a Beyond Borders Media Award and was nominated for three CSAs, including Best Factual Series, the Barbara Sears Award for Best Editorial Research, and Best Cross- Platform Project as the Digital Media Director, Writer, Producer, and Project Lead on the groundbreaking *Taken Knowledge Keeper* App and web series. Rebecca's episodes of *Taken* have also been an Official Selection of Cinema New York City, and nominated for a Golden Sheaf Award. As well as writing, directing, and producing the multi-award-winning shorts *Hard Way Girl* and *don't loiter on the way*, which played festivals around the world. She also wrote on the preschool series *Tipi Tales*, winner of two Parents Choice Gold Medal Awards, and a Blizzard Award (Best Children or Youth Series).

Formerly a Partner and Head of Development for Eagle Vision during the most productive period in its 20+ year history, and current co-owner, Rebecca continues to work with Eagle Vision to develop several feature and series projects around the world, including her own. With her partners, she shared in the 2022 Banff World Media Festival's Innovative Producer Award. Rebecca was part of the Eagle Vision team who were honoured as finalists for five international Shorty Awards (the best of the world's social media), winning gold distinction for two. Formerly one of Western Canada's top casting directors, Rebecca also oversees casting for many of Eagle Vision's projects. Recently, Rebecca wrote and directed on and shared show running duties with Dinae Robinson for Snapchat's hit first Canadian original series, *Reclaim(ed)*. She is also producing the soon-to-be-released feature *Finality of Dusk* (in post-production), produced the recently released feature *Diaspora* (world premiere - Festival du Nouveau Cinema in October, 2022) and executive produced the award-winning feature doc, *Carry It On* (Opening Night of TIFF 2022), and the feature doc *True Story for History Channel and Global* (world premiere Truth and Reconciliation Day, 2022). Other recent projects released in 2023 include the factual series *7TH GEN* (co-creator, executive producer, showrunner, writer, director – and she executive produced and story edited season II which was released in 2023), and the hit comedy web series *DJ Burnt Bannock* (executive producer, showrunner, director). Recently, Rebecca worked on *True Story Part Two* (executive producer and co- writer) released on History Channel on Truth and Reconciliation Day 2023. Currently, Rebecca is executive producing the third season of *7TH GEN* (in post production) and executive produced the scripted feature *Deaner '89*, which is set to release in 2024.

Rebecca is devoted to mentorship, working with the Women in Film and Television Toronto and Vancouver, the CMPA, ACTRA, WIFT, WIDC, among several other local and national organizations to support equity, diversity, accessibility, and inclusion. She is a frequent moderator and guest speaker at industry panels around the country. She has been an acting coach for over two decades, on film and television sets, and a teacher to thousands of performers. In 2015, Rebecca founded Orange Daisy Project, a social

action campaign in support of mental health for teen girls. She was honoured nationally as a CAMH Difference Maker and was ACTRA Manitoba's 2018 Woman of the Year.

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

2023 FINALITY OF DUSK, Eagle Vision Inc (Producer)

2022 BONES OF CROWS, Ayasew Ooskana Pictures/Eagle Vision Inc. / Grana Productions / Marie Clements Media / Screen Siren Pictures (Co-Executive Producer)

2022 DIASPORA, Eagle Vision Inc. (Producer)

2022 ORPHAN: FIRST KILL, Eagle Vision Inc./eOne/Dark Castle (Executive Producer)

2021 NIGHT RAIDERS, Eagle Vision Inc./Alcina/Uno Bravo, XYZ (Executive Producer)

2016 LOVESICK Eagle Vision Inc./eOne (Producer)

2014 REASONABLE DOUBT Eagle Vision Inc./South Creek Pictures Inc./Lionsgate (Executive Producer)

2012 WE WERE CHILDREN Eagle Vision Inc./eOne/NFB (Producer/Executive Producer)

2007 WALK ALL OVER ME Eagle Vision Inc./Chaos/The Weinstein Company/Mongrel (Executive Producer)

2007 BLUE STATE Eagle Vision Inc./Paquin Films/MGM/TVA Films (Producer)

2005 CAPOTE Eagle Vision Inc./A-Line/Infinity/Sony Pictures Classics/MGM/UA (Associate Producer)

Lisa Meeches: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1583205/>

Kyle Irving: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1564564/>

Rebecca Gibson: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0317151/>

Name of qualifying feature film

Deaner '89

Expected release date in 2024:

September 5, 2024

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

Theatrical

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

Mongrel Media

Film synopsis

Hard-luck metalhead Dean Murdoch (Paul Spence) has finally made it, and now everyone wants to know the story behind his unlikely rise to fame. With Dean as narrator, we're taken back to the 80s; when being a hockey jock was a badge of honour, Jazzercise was a national movement, seatbelts were optional, and teachers were as drunk as their students.

Teenage Dean is a small-town hockey star whose life takes a turn for the weird when a satanic steamer trunk full of his estranged father's personal effects shows up. As the call to heed the dark forces of heavy metal gets louder, Dean angers a biker gang, steals a bus, and discovers that drugs and slapshots are a dangerous mix.

The high-tempo comedy packs in the laughs, while using comedy to spark conversations about identity and the impact of the Canadian government's decades-old Indigenous adoption policies that continue to impact us all today.

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

Eagle Vision's slogan is "We create content that creates change." This philosophy underpins all our work, and its execution is tailored to each project. Every subject matter requires a specific tone, structure, and finesse to effectively raise awareness, educate the audience, and ideally effect change. Sometimes, the format allows for a straightforward and clear presentation (for example, with a documentary about the residential school experience the viewers are seeking out the content). Other times, the format needs a more nuanced approach, such as using humor to engage the audience (as seen in "Deaner '89," which wraps a significant story about the scooping of children and the importance of identity in an irreverent comedy about a headbanger discovering a passion for heavy metal music).

The story of removing children from families impacts hundreds of thousands of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, yet it remains largely untold. Paul Spence, who stars in the film and also wrote it, incorporated his own experiences of lost and rediscovered identity into the script. This narrative comes from a genuine place and is told from the perspective of an Indigenous man with lived experience. Spence's comedy skills are not only a coping mechanism for his and his family's past traumas but also his most effective way to express himself. This approach allows him to reach audiences who love the character of The Deaner and might not otherwise engage with this subject matter.

Ultimately, if we can tell an Indigenous creator's story, share truths about our collective past, and reach an audience who might otherwise never hear these truths, then we've accomplished something important that can seed informed change.

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

We tell so many serious and intense stories at Eagle Vision, sometimes we need to ensure we are balancing the content creation slate with some fun. What's more fun than spending time telling an important story of identity with one of the zaniest characters in Canadian cinema history as the protagonist. All three of the Eagle Vision partners came up watching the feral antics of Dean Murdoch in the Fubar films and series. We enjoyed the uniqueness of the format and freedom of just being true to yourself that Dean always exhibited.

We had the privilege of working with Paul Spence as part of the team with we assembled for the #sacredMMIWG campaign and the National Closing Event for the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls from 2018-2019. The campaign reached one-third of all Canadians and was essential in shifting the perception of the issue in the eyes of Canadians. Having had that experience with Paul, we knew we wanted to work with him again.

Paul came to us with the idea and we immediately supported the commissioning of a script and quickly moved the project from concept to reality. Sam McGlynn was already attached to the project when Paul brought the idea to us and once we got to know Sam, we were thrilled by his involvement. Unlike many projects which suffer through development and struggle to find a market, Deaner '89 was quickly embraced by the market and funding agencies and we had a period of less than 2.5 years from concept to camera.

The challenges came with production and post.

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

We are not service producers; we are original Canadian content developers and creators. We work independently and in partnership with other Canadian producers to develop the stories that Canadian storytellers want to tell, catering to an audience eager to see themselves, their communities, history, and culture reflected in the content they consume.

What makes us unique is our commitment to telling untold stories—those that have struggled to break through market barriers. We focus on narratives that matter both now and in the future, and we tell stories others might be afraid to tell, often because of the truths and past traumas they reveal. We approach these stories with a mindful intent

to heal any wounds they may uncover, offering hope and a vision for a path forward that fosters positive change.

What defines your body of work?

First and foremost, our company philosophy is encapsulated in the phrase: "We create content that creates change."

At the heart of everything we produce is a commitment to social activism. While we prioritize stories from the Indigenous community, our creative scope extends beyond this underrepresented group. We collaborate with members of the Deaf community, as exemplified in projects like *Finality of Dusk*, co-written by a Deaf writer and featuring a Deaf character in a groundbreaking portrayal. Our team includes individuals from the neurodiverse community and those in recovery from addiction. We actively prioritize Queer characters in our narratives and have prominently featured members of the Black, Asian, and Indigenous communities as leads in our films and shows.

Whether our themes are Indigenous in nature or not, all our content is imbued with traditional ceremonial practices, including the use of medicine, pipes, and prayers. Guided by elders and driven by a commitment to amplify untold stories and marginalized voices, inclusivity remains at the core of our creative endeavours.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

Our leadership in Canadian independent production is defined by our unwavering commitment to our guiding philosophy, "We create content, that creates change," drives us to tell untold stories and address significant social issues with the intent to heal and inspire positive change, while serving an audience with informed entertainment.

We prioritize narratives from the Indigenous community and embrace stories from other underrepresented groups. Our projects highlight our dedication to inclusivity, featuring diverse voices including the Deaf, neurodiverse, people with disabilities, and Queer communities, as well as BIPOC individuals.

Traditional ceremonial practices are integral to our work, ensuring authenticity and respect. Guided by elders and driven by social activism, we create content that resonates deeply with audiences, reflecting their communities, histories, and cultures.

By consistently developing original Canadian content that tackles difficult truths and promotes healing, we lead the way in independent production, championing diverse and marginalized voices through entertaining and compelling content.

Laura Lightbown, Carl Bessai

Production company(ies)

Terra Films Inc., Raven West Films Ltd.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Laura Lightbown is a Producer with more than 170 hours of award-winning, prime-time dramatic television among her many credits. Laura is a Producer and Executive Producer best known for her work with creator/showrunner/writer Chris Haddock (Boardwalk Empire, Intelligence, DaVinci's Inquest, Romeo Section). Laura worked with Brent Butt's Sparrow Media Company where she Produced the award winning feature film No Clue and executive produced the series Hiccups for CTV. Prior to that, Laura was CEO of Haddock Entertainment where she executive produced the critically acclaimed series Intelligence , 4Real, the multi-award winning, eight season, series Da Vinci's Inquest, the series, Da Vinci's City Hall and several made-for-television movies.

She continues to produce numerous feature films, including Lichtenberg (2023 Best Dramatic Film – Berlin Independent Film Festival), Influence (2023 LA International Film Festival, WFF Best Director award 2022), Evelyne (WFF 2021, Leo Award Nominee), In Her City (2020, Cinequest, Leo Award Nominee) and Kreuzberg (2018, Achtung Berlin New Film Award nominee). Her films have premiered at some of the world's best festival including Toronto, Berlin and Sundance and she has won four CSA Awards and four Leo Awards for her work in Canadian film and television.

Carl Bessai is a filmmaker who has made over 20 narrative feature films and has been honored with over 100 invitations to the world's leading Film Festivals including Sundance, Berlin, Toronto, Busan, Moscow and Istanbul.

He has received over 50 jury awards, critics' prizes and nominations including awards from the Canadian Academy, the Irish Academy, Critic's Circles in Toronto, Vancouver and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. He has directed a host of internationally acclaimed actors including Sir Ian McKellen, Carrie-Anne Moss, Cory Monteith and Bruce Dern and he enjoys a reputation as a filmmaker that always combines visual style with the emotional intensity of excellent performances.

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

Lichtenberg – Best Dramatic Film – Berlin Independent Film Festival 2024

Influence – Best Director – Whistler Film Festival 2022

Evelyne – Best Director nomination – Leo Awards, UBCP rising star award

In Her City – Borsos Award nomination – WFF 2020

Kreuzberg – New Berlin Film Award nomination – Achtung Berlin 2018
The Lears – Irish Academy Award – Best Supporting Actor, Orlando Film Festival Best Ensemble Award 2017
Rehearsal – Maverick Award WFF 2015
Bad City – Independent Spirit Award Nomination – Oldenburg Film Festival 2014
No Clue – Best Director Award – LA Comedy Festival 2013
Sisters & Brothers – BC Academy Award, Best Film, Best Director 2011
Fathers & Sons – Vancouver Critic's Circle – Best Film 2010
Repeaters – BC Academy nominations Best Film, Best Director 2010
Cole/2010/95 min./Fiction - Moscow Critics prize
Mothers & Daughters/2008/90 min./Fiction
Normal/2007/100 min./Fiction
Unnatural&Accidental/2006/95 min./Fiction - Moma Screening
Severed/2005/90 min./Fiction - LA Screamefest prize
Emile/2003/90 min./Fiction - TIFF, Moscow
Lola/2001/100 min./Fiction - Sundance Film Festival
Johnny/1999/90 min./Fiction - TIFF Jury Prize

<https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm0509970/credits>
<https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm0078762/credits>

Name of qualifying feature film
Field Sketches

Expected release date in 2024:
September 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:
Shoreline Entertainment - Festival Release Date TBD

Film synopsis

Logline: A middle-aged Vancouver architect, whose business and personal life are imploding, moves to a farm in Saskatchewan to spend a winter living on the land.

Synopsis: Peter has been trying to get back to his creative roots as an architect. His successful partnership with his college friend Bruce has left him feeling as though he can no longer find the art in his creative practice. But downsizing to his own firm proves more difficult than expected and when he realizes he has to sell his house in order to survive, his girlfriend leaves him. With nothing left to hold him in the city, he decides to move out to his cousin's farm and spend the winter in Saskatchewan. At first his plan is to build a cabin and winter like his mentor Henry Thoreau, but the weather soon overwhelms him. Cousin George takes pity on him and lets him stay in the old farmhouse where their fathers both grew up in the 1950's. The place is largely unchanged since then, with no running water, and the only heat provided by a wood stove that require an endless supply of firewood. Peter soon discovers that pioneer life is a little more than he bargained for. And the silence and loneliness play tricks on his imagination. He is joined by Henry himself, whose conversation keeps him thinking about his purpose in this world, by the occasional visit from his cousin George, and by a series of characters real and imagined who tell him the story of what it was once like to live in this place full time. When his daughter Molly shows up to bring him back to civilization, she immediately notices the changes in Peter. He has become a man who has only now begun to live happily in the present for the first time in his life.

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

'Field Sketches' is a personal film that grew out of my own professional challenges. After a life of making films, what really matters the most to a person? The work you leave behind, the buildings that house your memories or the people around you? What do we leave behind and what do we strive for as artists? In 'Field Sketches', I am transposing my own filmmaking journey onto the career of a fictional architect. Like cinema, architecture is an art form that has a profound connection to large material costs, capital, infrastructure and commerce – it can be personal but ultimately it is impossible to discuss an architect's work outside the world of commercial interests. For this reason, I felt it was the perfect narrative vehicle for a film about a middle-aged man whose life and work have left him with questions about the point of it all at the end of a long career. And as a man who sometimes fantasizes about going off to live in the woods like Henry Thoreau, I thought it would be a great subject for an exploration. Peter's daughter Molly, like my own daughter, is an intelligent, supportive enthusiast who wants the best

for her father, even if it means letting him wander off into the middle of nowhere to live unrealistically alone in a brutal winter climate to which he is highly unsuited.

I also wanted to make a film set on my family homestead in Saskatchewan. The land was first farmed by my German Grandfather in the 1920's, and my father and all his siblings were born and raised in the same house in which principal photography took place. My real-life cousin George runs the farm to this day and has inexplicably kept the old house like a kind of family museum, right down to the old hat my Grandfather Ludwig used to wear, which still rests on a hook by the door. As a filmmaker, the patina of the walls, the light that bounces off the low ceilings, the tiny library of German books that still sit on the shelves as though the ghost of Ludwig promises to come every night with an oil lamp to continue his reading - it's all too marvelous to not capture in a film!

'Field Sketches' is my homage to pioneering, to family history, to the people who lived and died in these lonely places. To remember them is to understand our own modern world through their eyes, ears and experiences because they are the people who brought us here. And Peter, with all his education and creativity, has never learned these simple lessons until now.

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

Field Sketches is both a realist film and a magic realist film. Employing a Dardennes-style observational minimalist approach to drama alongside the quirky non-sequiturs of a magical realism style was one of the great pleasures of the project. Front and centre in this quest was the approach to the cast, and the writing, which took place over a six month period of workshops and discussions with the core company of actors who appear in the film. Allowing them into the process through improvisation, readings, reactions, criticism and collaboration was a wonderful way to engage each of them in the project and to bring their own unique voices and talents to all the characters. Early on, we began having Ben Cotton reading the character of George and then Henry and after one of the workshops it seemed obvious to everyone that Ben could and should play both characters. This ignited an idea, which we ran with across the narrative – to treat the film like a theatre play and to work the ensemble so that several actors would indeed play more than one character. Although this may be confusing to some in our audience, I think it is a wonderful motif, which anchors the narrative experiences for protagonist Peter in his subjective point of view. In life, people always remind us of other people and his memory of Frances inspires him to see Trudy working in the small town – different from Frances, but still somehow the same – both played by Sara Canning. Similarly, the imagined Frida Kahlo is also Molly's friend Flo and will later be Freddy's indigenous girlfriend Maggie, who haunts the farm alongside her true love – all of them played by the talented Tanaya Beatty. The casting of a single actor for multiple

roles gives the audience the message that the film is a fantasy, that the experience is subjective like memory. All of this to say that what Peter learns by the end of the film is not historical record, but rather emotional truth. And emotional journeys are the essence of cinema.

Producing Challenges: To realize the film, we undertook a low-fi production style, which we call contingent production. This is a filmmaking approach that renounces power, control, and certainty in favour of adaptation, appropriation, repurposing, and caretaking, toward convivial and communal art making. In many ways born from the documentary tradition, contingent production requires that a director embrace many elements of reality and not depend on the usual order and preconception that has become the hallmark of the industrial filmmaking complex. Because film has traditionally been an expensive medium, it has evolved in an industrial model where outcomes are predicated on a degree of scale and structure using large industrial pieces of equipment, crews, logistics and design approaches.

Contingent production also puts the creative energy into the collaboration between actor and director, employing theatre techniques as varied as rehearsal and improvisation to situations where one actor might play multiple characters. Its sole purpose is to execute a narrative that approximates reality and the truth that one can only find by allowing aspects of real life, natural occurrences and chance to flow through the imagined narrative.

The outcome of a contingent production process is a noticeable degree of honesty and truth in the acting, in the settings and the production design. It also enables the filmmaker to work with a greatly reduced footprint all of which is an enormous benefit to the wasteful and impractical nature of industrial filmmaking. For creative and environmental reasons, this artistic practice will become increasingly looked upon as a solution to curb the ever-spiraling costs, both financing and environmental, of conventional industrial filmmaking practices.

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

For us, film production is an extension of our collective national desire to put our country on the map. As a culture that has been primarily raised in the shadow of the enormous cultural machinery of the United States, it has always been difficult to find an audience for stories that feature the Canadian landscape, history and people. If we are not committed as producers to telling Canadian stories, then who do we expect will tell them for us? We see it as our calling and a natural extension of our lives in this place and we actively seek out projects which can reflect this place back to ourselves and our audiences.

What defines your body of work?

The majority of films we have made reflect something of a spirit of collaboration and curiosity that is a running theme in our production practice. We like to think about filmmaking more in terms of social agency, and narrative curiosity than as an opportunity to chase trends in the market for the promise of great financial return. It is probably why actors have always been attracted to our projects. They can tell that we are making our films because the stories run deep in our veins and this authenticity speaks to them as artists and creators.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

We work as champions of Canadian stories and our filmmaking practice has always focused on artistry over commercial principals. We respect the benefits of service production in our communities but we have always positioned ourselves as Canadian storytellers whose priority is to explore our own unique national narrative instead of attempting to mask our Canadian culture.

Marie Claude Poulin

Production company(ies)

Sphère Media

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Marie-Claude Poulin has built a solid reputation over her 25 years in the film industry, having worked with notable companies such as Malofilm, Lionsgate, TVA Films, and Equinoxe Films before co-founding Item 7 Inc. in 2009. Seven years later, she ventured to establish her own company, MCP Productions, with the ambition of creating films that resonate with a wide audience—a goal she's been fortunate enough to achieve.

Throughout her journey, Poulin has had the privilege of collaborating with both local and international producers to bring diverse stories to the screen, guided by the visions of emerging and established directors. Her productions have been honoured with accolades, including an Oscar nominations for Best Foreign Language Film (War Witch) and Best Film (Brooklyn) as well as esteemed awards such as the Genies and Jutras for films like Kim Nguyen's "Rebelle" (War Witch). Noteworthy projects include "Café de Flore" (Jean-Marc Vallée), "Death of a Ladies' Man" (Matt Bissonnette), and "Tempête" (Ride Above, Christian Duguay), released in France on over 600 screens by Pathe in 2022.

Since joining Sphere in 2021, Poulin remains committed to showcasing the talents of remarkable filmmakers, contributing to the company's ongoing success. Recent films include "Le Plongeur" (Francis Leclerc), an adaptation of a popular Quebec novel, released in 2023 to critical acclaim and a successful box office. In 2023 she produced 1995, the sequel to Ricardo Trogi's successful autobiographical series. Coming up is a Canadian/Irish co production ETHEL, starring Sarah Paulson and Shira Haas and to be directed by Aisling Walsh.

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

https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm1317447/?ref=search_search_search_result_1

2023 LE PLONGEUR. Francis Leclerc

Festival du film de Angoulême

Tempête, Christian Duguay

Cinemanía

2019 DEATH OF A LADIES MAN – Matt Bissonnette Producer

Calgary FF, Edmonton FF , Whistler FF

2019 THE CURSE OF AUDREY EARNSHAW – Thomas Lee Executive Producer
Fantasia

2018 PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION – Franck Phelizon Executive Producer
Netflix Worldwide

2018 SKIN – Guy Nattiv Co-producer
TIFF – Berlin Film Festival

2016 EYE ON JULIET – Kim Nguyen Executive producer
TIFF

2015 BROOKLYN – John Crowley Co-producer 3 Oscar nominations
Sundance, TIFF

2015 LE FILS DE JEAN – Pilippe Lioret Co-producer
Festival du Film Angoulême, Cinemania

2015 PAYS - Chloé Robichaud Producer
TIFF – Seattle Intl Film festival (Won – New Directors)

2014 LES MAÎTRES DU SUSPENSE – Stéphane Lapointe Producer

2014 MIRACULUM - Podz Producer

2013 MEETINGS WITH A YOUNG POET - Rudy Barichello Producer

2013 THREE NIGHT STAND – Pat Kiely Executive Producer

2013 THE COLONY – Jeff Renfroe Producer
Sitges Intl Film Fest- Grand Prize (Panorama)

2013 CYANURE - Severine Cornamusaz Co-producer

2012 MARS ET AVRIL - Martin Villeneuve Executive producer

2012 REBELLE (War Witch) – Kim Nguyen Producer
Oscar Nomination – Best Foreign Film Jutra – Best Film. CFA – Best Film Best Actress – Berlin FF

2011 CAFÉ DE FLORE – Jean Marc Vallée Producer
Venice Days - TIFF, Atlantic FF and Vancouver FF (Best Canadian Feature)

2006 LET IT RIDE Executive Producer
Whistler Film Festival

2004 WHITECOATS Executive Producer

2002 AFTERMATH Executive Producer

Name of qualifying feature film
1995

Expected release date in 2024:
July 31, 2024

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

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

Film synopsis

In 1994, Ricardo had given up his dream to become a filmmaker. However, a call from Radio-Canada advising that he was selected as a finalist for the program La Course 1994-95 rekindled his artistic flame and completely changed his life. Halfway through Ricardo's journey, as he lands in Egypt and experiences many problems while producing one of his short films, Ricardo will question many things, including his own nature. Is he or is he not a true artist?

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

Ricardo Trogi's first 3 films of this series were hugely successful, critically and at the box office (also winning Jutra and Iris awards). This 4th one, recalling how Ricardo became a director is still a comedy, but with more of an emotional journey and it's a subject matter very close to the director's heart (his relationship with his father). I think it's extremely important keep supporting successful established filmmakers. Last year's box office for Canadian films was the best since the pandemic and in order for the industry to keep lobbying for more funds, it's important for films to perform at the box office. The pressure is on for 1995 to maintain or exceed the series' success.

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

The story required filming not only in several locations in the province, but internationally as well. It takes place around the world, but mostly in Cairo and Nepal. Obtaining the maximum funding for a french language film was a challenge in itself, but

I was able to convince the funders that filming part of the film abroad was essential to the story. Then, juggling the different requirements by Sodec, provincial or federal tax credits to remain a Canadian film was the major challenge. With the uncertain political climate in Egypt, we chose to shoot that portion in Morocco , but needed to go to Nepal for the finale. Filming abroad has it's own challenges, but Morocco has rich film community. The Canadian crew blended well and worked along the Moroccan team despite the different ways of working and language barrier. In Nepal, there is no film industry and our smaller crew took on the challenge (even bringing all the equipment in and out of the country) of working with less experienced crew members.

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

I feel my extensive experience, industry connections, commitment to telling stories by Canadians, innovation and adaptability, uniquely define me a Canadian producer. I also have the ability and chance to work in the 2 official languages which is not that common. I have, over the years enabled Canadian filmmakers to tell their unique stories whether they take place in Canada or not. I feel that today, what makes Canadian films "Canadians" is the filmmakers rather than the subject matter itself. Canada is a very diverse country and it should be reflected in it's films. They infuse their creativity in the script, direction and aim to attract not only Canadians, but international audiences. Some of the films I have produced have significantly shaped the Canadian film landscape such as Kim Nguyen's *Rebelle*, nominated for best foreign language film at the Oscars, Jean Marc Vallée's *Café de Flore* or Francis Leclerc's adaptation of the best seller *Le Plongeur*. My previous experience in distribution has also enabled me to connect with industry players in distribution and finance internationally and it's enabled me to be involved in several significant Canadian co productions including *Brooklyn* (nominated for 3 Academy Awards) and more recently *Tempête* released on over 600 screens in France by Pathé.

What defines your body of work?

I have produced films across various genres, from drama and romance to thriller and comedy. This versatility demonstrates my ability to handle different storytelling styles and cater to diverse audiences. I always develop projects with one goal in mind: no matter the genre, the films must find their audience. I guide the filmmakers so they can tell the story they want to tell while keeping in mind that they want as many people as possible to see their film.

I think my instincts, my ability to select and develop scripts with depth and resonance is a hallmark of my work. I look for stories with strong, relatable and memorable figures. This focus on character development enhances the emotional impact of the projects, and I try to strongly emphasize that aspect with the writers in the development process.

I also believe that the international collaborations I have been involved with have showcased my ability to navigate and bridge different cultural and cinematic landscapes. My willingness to embrace new technologies and innovative filmmaking techniques has kept and will continue to keep my projects fresh and relevant in a rapidly changing industry.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I have an extensive portfolio of successful films that have garnered critical acclaim and commercial success. The slate includes a variety of genres and demonstrates my versatility and ability to produce compelling content across different types of stories. Many of the films I've produced have received prestigious awards and nominations, both domestically and internationally. I feel this recognition underscores my dedication to high-quality filmmaking. I have worked with a wide range of acclaimed directors, writers, and actors, building a robust network within the Canadian film industry in French and English. I am very closely involved in all stages of development, often initiating projects. I have successfully engaged in international co-productions, expanding the reach and impact of the projects I am producing. This ability to form strategic partnerships has been crucial in navigating the challenges of independent film production in the past and will even be more crucial in the years to come as obtaining domestic and international funding becomes more competitive. Even if I work on projects with established filmmakers (often some I have already worked with), I continue to pursue my commitment to nurturing new and emerging filmmakers, providing them with opportunities to grow and succeed. I am a strong proponent of the discovery and development of fresh voices in Canadian cinema.

Over the years I have been involved in many industry panels, juries and committees as well as serving on the board of the Quebec Bureau of Cinema and Television (BCTQ) for the past 5 years.

Martin Katz

Production company(ies)

Prospero Pictures

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Martin Katz, C.M. Founder and President, Prospero Pictures

Martin Katz is Founder and President of Prospero Pictures. One of the most prolific feature film producers in Canada, Martin's credits include Hotel Rwanda, which was nominated for three Academy Awards and three Golden Globe Awards, and over two decades producing films with celebrated director David Cronenberg, including A Dangerous Method, which had its world premiere in competition at the Venice film Festival, Spider and Cosmopolis which premiered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival, and Maps to the Stars, for which Julianne Moore received the Best Actress Palme d'Or at Cannes. Their latest production together, The Shrouds, premiered in competition at the 77th FIF in Cannes.

Recently, Martin produced DW Waterson's feature debut, Backspot, which premiered at TIFF and SXSW and served as Executive Producer of Caitlin Cronenberg's feature debut, Humane.

Martin's television projects include the documentary limited series The Case Against Cosby for CBC and Rive Gauche Television, the biographical documentary series In Their Own Words for CBC and PBS, Ice Road Truckers, which recently completed its eleventh season, one of History Channel's highest-rated documentary series and Spectacle: Elvis Costello With..., an award-winning music and performance series hosted by Elvis Costello with appearances by Bono, Sting, Bruce Springsteen, Sheryl Crow, Herbie Hancock, Rufus Wainwright, Renée Fleming and Diana Krall. The Guardian called Spectacle "... quite simply the greatest music series ever produced for television. Spectacle was co-produced with Rocket Pictures' David Furnish and Sir Elton John.

Martin holds degrees in law from the University of Toronto and the Université de Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne). He is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, Vice-Chair of the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, past-Chair of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television and a recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal. In 2021, Martin was named Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres by the Republic of France and in 2022 he was invested as a Member of the Order of Canada.

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

https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm0441792/?ref=instant_nm_1&q=martin%20katz

Feature Films:

The Shrouds – Producer (Pyramide, Sphere, SBS) starring Vincent Cassel, Diane Kruger, Guy Pearce, Sandrine Holt

Backspot – Producer (LevelFilm, XYZ, Fortitude) starring Devery Jacobs, Kudakwashe Rutendo, Evan Rachel Wood

Any Other Way – The Jackie Shane Story – Executive Producer (NFB, Crave), Documentary Feature

Humane – Executive Producer (Elevation, IFC, Paramount) starring Jay Baruchel, Emily Hampshire, Enrico Colantoni, Peter Gallagher

Akilla's Escape – Executive Producer (XYZ, CBC) starring Saul Williams, Vic Mensa, Donisha Prendergast

Tammy's Always Dying – Executive Producer (Aqute, Elevation) starring Felicity Huffman, Anastasia Philips

Our House – Producer (XYZ, Elevation) starring Thomas Mann, Nicola Peltz

Trench 11 – Executive Producer (Raven Banner Entertainment) starring Rossif Sutherland, Karine Vanasse

The Journey is the Destination – Producer (Out of Africa/Voltage Pictures) starring Ben Schnetzer, Maria Bello, Ella Purnell, Kelly Macdonald, Sam Hazeldine

Maps to the Stars – Producer (eOne/Focus World) starring Julianne Moore, John Cusack, Mia Wasikowska, Robert Pattinson, Sarah Gadon, Olivia Williams, Evan Bird

Cosmopolis – Producer (Alfama Films/Kinology/eOne) starring Robert Pattinson, Sarah Gadon, Paul Giamatti, Juliette Binoche

Man on the Train – Producer (Tribeca Film/Maple Pictures/Preferred Content) starring Donald Sutherland, Larry Mullen Jr.

A Dangerous Method – Co-Producer (Recorded Picture Company/eOne/Sony Pictures Classics) starring Michael Fassbender, Keira Knightley, Viggo Mortensen, Sarah Gadon, Vincent Cassel

Inconceivable – Producer (Penny Wolf Associates/Scion Films) starring Elizabeth McGovern, Geraldine Chaplin, Amanda Plummer, Jennifer Tilly, Colm Feore and Jordi Molla

Shake Hands with the Devil – Executive Producer (DHX Media) starring Roy Dupuis and Jean-Hughes Anglade, director Roger Spottiswoode.

Closing the Ring – Co-Producer (ContentFilm International) starring Shirley MacLaine, Christopher Plummer and Mischa Barton, director and co-producer Lord Richard Attenborough.

It's a Boy Girl Thing – Producer (Rocket Pictures/Icon) starring Kevin Zegers and Samaire Armstrong, Co-producers David Furnish and Steve Hamilton-Shaw, Executive Producer Sir Elton John

Intervention – Producer (New Films Int'l/Scion Films) starring Andie MacDowell, Jennifer Tilley, Rupert Graves, Colm Feore and Gary Farmer, written and directed by Mary McGuckian

Hotel Rwanda - Executive Producer (MGM/UA, Lion's Gate International) starring Don Cheadle, Nick Nolte, Joaquin Phoenix and Sophie Okonedo, directed by Terry George

Haven – Associate Producer (Stratus Films/Whatever Pictures/Lumina Films) starring Orlando Bloom and Agnes Bruckner, written and directed by Frank Flowers

Some Things That Stay – Executive Producer (Don Carmody Productions) starring Alberta Watson, Kevin Zegers and Yannick Bisson directed by Gail Harvey

The Gospel of John - Executive Producer (THINKFilm, Grosvenor Park) starring Henry Ian Cusick, Christopher Plummer Stander – Producer (Seven Arts, Grosvenor Park, Imaginarium) starring Thomas Jane and Deborah Kara Unger, directed by Bronwyn Hughes

Spider – Executive Producer (Capitol Films, Grosvenor Park, Alliance Atlantis) starring Ralph Fiennes, Gabriel Byrne and Miranda Richardson, directed by David Cronenberg

The Claim - Executive Producer (MGM/UA, Alliance Atlantis, Pathe) starring Wes Bentley, Nastassja Kinski, Sarah Polley and Milla Jovovich, directed by Michael Winterbottom, co-produced with Revolution Films, London

Name of qualifying feature film

The Shrouds

Expected release date in 2024:

May 20 - Cannes World Premiere; September 11 - TIFF NA Premiere

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

Theatrical

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

Sphere - Canada; Pyramide - France; Cannes/TIFF/NYFF

Film synopsis

Karsh, 50, is a prominent businessman. Inconsolable since the death of his wife, he invents GraveTech, revolutionary and controversial technology that enables the living to monitor their dear departed in their shrouds. One night, multiple graves, including that of Karsh's wife, are desecrated. Karsh sets out to track down the perpetrators.

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

The Shrouds represents my fifth feature film collaboration with renowned director David Cronenberg over a creative relationship that spans two decades. The untimely loss of his wife and collaborator of over sixty years shocked and distressed all who had the privilege of knowing and working with them. The Shrouds, a conspiratorial thriller of enduring grief and surviving loss was a cathartic and important story to tell in this context. Tragically, I lost my own father just weeks before we commenced principal photography and my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer just after our world premiere. Living through Karsh's own journey in the film helped me deal with and face my personal grief. This is the gift of art, in general, and of film in particular.

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

David approached me a number of years ago with a pilot episode he had written for a series based on the characters in The Shrouds, and asked if I thought I could help set it up at a broadcaster. Everywhere we took the project, broadcasters and distributors eager for a new Cronenberg project, and a series, at that, told us the material was "too dark." We hit the same roadblock at every front.

I reached out to my co-producing partner from Maps to the Stars, Saïd Ben Saïd, a producer and distributor based in Paris, and invited him to collaborate with us on the project. After meeting similar roadblocks in Europe, we asked David if he thought the story could work as a feature film, instead of a series. He said he would have to think about it, and soon returned with the stunning screenplay for the feature film.

Immediately, distributors in Canada, France and the US expressed enthusiasm for the project, subject, as is often the case, to casting. We thought an international cast of European and Canadian actors would generate the broadest interest and soon had assembled a dream cast including Vincent Cassel (with whom we had worked previously on A Dangerous Method), Diane Kruger, Guy Pearce and Sandrine Holt. Painfully, production was delayed by the ongoing scourge of the global pandemic. Once production was finally allowed to proceed, just weeks into preproduction, my father passed away suddenly. I found getting back into production immediately to be both a distraction and a salve at a personal level. The extent to which critics and viewers who may have been touched by loss and grief are touched by the emotional impact of The Shrouds is both profound and rewarding.

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

I have worked my entire career in Canada, in all aspects of media, from publishing (at McClelland and Stewart in the mid- 1980's) to broadcasting (at CBC in the late 1980's and early 1990's) to television production (at Atlantis Films in the early 1990's) to interactive media (at Microsoft's MSN Canada in the mid-1990's) to feature film finance and production since 1999.

I come to filmmaking in this country, not through film school, but, as many who have gone before me, through law school. I have had the pleasure of working in nearly every aspect of the broader media industry in this country; from publishing and broadcasting to ISP and new media production and finally television and film production. Fluently bilingual, I have also lived and worked in most regions of this country, and in both English and French, and have eschewed several opportunities to work and live elsewhere, because of an abiding interest in exploring our own stories and developing our industry to do so here.

I grew up in Winnipeg, where I made films on both regular 8mm film, and then on the radical new technology, Super 8mm film – writing, directing, shooting, cutting and splicing stories together. I came to Toronto to attend law school at U of T. I spent summers studying French in Montreal and Quebec Civil Law in Sherbrooke, and continued my legal education at the Sorbonne in Paris where I obtained a Masters degree in International Trade Law. I served under articles in the practice of international trade law in Toronto and took a leave of absence to teach Business and Labour Law in French at the Université de Moncton in New Brunswick. I began working in our industry when I returned to Toronto to work as manager of subsidiary rights at our country's largest publishing house, McClelland & Stewart; I also taught a course in Intellectual Property Law at University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. At M&S, I developed a program to get our fiction titles known by film and television producers, as a source of properties for development. M&S became a sponsor of the Festival of Festivals, as it was then known, and I distributed promotional copies of hundreds of Canadian novels for which the film and television adaptation rights were available and controlled by the publisher. It is safe to say that no one in Canadian publishing had ever done that before.

I went on to join CBC, working under Ivan Fecan, as a program executive, and ultimately became Head of Business Affairs for In-House Arts and Entertainment Production. I was poached from CBC by a small television company, at that time of about 20 people; Atlantis Films hired me to executive produce and produce television shows. My first project, WildSide which we produced for Family Channel and Nickelodeon, set the stage for what would be a career combining my background in business and international trade law and a love of storytelling; I produced a kids and animals adventure show that was originally conceived to be shot in a zoo, and took it on safari in Southern Africa as a

treaty co-production. Nelson Mandela had just been released from prison, the ANC was about to be elected to power and Canada was the only country in the world with a co-production treaty with South Africa. By making WildSide as a co-production, I was able to combine our broadcast licences in Canada and the US with a pay-tv licence with the then-new Pay-TV service M-Net in Johannesburg and produce a ground-breaking kids' series on location, rather than in a zoo. Nearly everything I have produced since then has been an international co-production; allowing me to combine my training as an international trade lawyer and my experiences in media to enhance production values and bring a Canadian perspective to stories that can find an audience both at home and around the world.

I have also worked extensively on a volunteer basis in the civil life of Canada, in particular as Chair of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television over a critical decade during which participation and engagement with

What defines your body of work?

As an international trade lawyer and creative producer with extensive experience living, studying or working in nearly every region of Canada, I have been able to bring a strong sense of Canadian identity together with international cooperation by partnering with producers in other countries on international treaty co-productions and co-ventures. My early experience working on television co-productions at Atlantis Films taught me the value of international relationships. When a colleague asked me if I could help find financing partners for a script called Hotel Rwanda, written by the great Irish screenwriter of The Boxer and In the Name of the Father, I was able to call upon collaborators I had met in Johannesburg while producing a kids television series for Family Channel and Nickelodeon. I was ultimately able to put together equity and distribution partners in Milan, Johannesburg and London to create the first ever UK-Italy-South Africa co-production. Hotel Rwanda went on to win the audience award at TIFF and was nominated for three Academy Awards and three Golden Globe awards, and won numerous awards at literally dozens of festivals around the world. Still today, I meet people whose lives were affected by seeing that film. Having made so significantly impactful a film early in my career has led me to be scrupulously selective about the projects I focus on. I work in film and television because I believe the stories we see affect who we are and how we choose to live our lives. I am driven by stories that can have a positive effect on audiences.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

Throughout my career, I have been a promoter of independent production in this country. My first job at CBC was to open the office of independent production, where I reported to Ivan Fecan and the very inception of independent television production. At

Atlantis Films, I worked for one of the foundational independent production companies in the country. When I joined Microsoft's MSN Canada, my job was to build an internet-based information and entertainment network, in French and English, with independently produced content from across the country. And as the founder of my own independent production company nearly 25 years ago, I have been a leading proponent of independent production in this country. For a decade, from 2011 to 2020, I was Chair of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, the primary representative of film and television artisans, artists, technicians and producers, working in front of and behind the camera, above the line and below the line, in French and in English from coast to coast to coast. I am immensely proud of having overseen the creation of the Canadian Screen Awards and building the audience for celebrating excellence in our industry from nearly imperceptible to hundreds of millions of impressions over that time.

My projects represent the culmination of a career uniquely dedicated to the development of creative properties across the media in this country. Along the way, I have contributed, as well, to the community, by lecturing at CFC, York and Ryerson. I have been a member of the CFTPA's and the CMPA's feature film committee and an invited speaker, Chair and keynote speaker, at conferences from LA to Toronto, from Moscow to Qatar and from Halifax to Melbourne to Cannes - on production financing and international co-productions.

I was pleased to establish the Martin Katz/TIFF Canadian Independent Screenwriting Fellowship, in collaboration with the Blacklist. We created the Fellowship as a way to discover and mentor new Canadian talent, bringing the winning screenwriter to TIFF to meet potential collaborators and partners.

I am honoured to have been inducted as a Member of the Order of Canada for my "contributions to the Canadian film, television and media industries, as a producer and leading innovator" and to be recognized for my lifetime body of work by being named a Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres by the Republic of France.

Mary Anne Waterhouse

Production company(ies)

Quadrant Motion Pictures

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Mary Anne's roots lie in the world of production accounting, a career she began shortly after graduating with honors from UBC's Film & Theatre program. This foundation in finance has made her a wizard with budgets, balancing creativity with commerce.

A paradox of left-brain/right-brain thinking, Mary Anne has produced everything from award-winning indie films to blockbuster hits. Her notable independent credits include the cult classic "Fido", starring Carrie-Anne Moss and Billy Connolly. This highly regarded feature played at TIFF and Sundance film festivals before opening theatrically around the world. Other notable works include "Desolation Sound" featuring Jennifer Beals, the touching comedy-drama "The Steps," and the CTV movie "100 Days in the Jungle", filmed in the actual jungles of Costa Rica and earning Mary Anne her first Best TV Movie Gemini. Mary Anne's talents extend to production services on international projects like "Beautiful Joe" with Sharon Stone and Billy Connolly, Stephen King's "Kingdom Hospital," and a slew of American TV movies. She has contributed to a range of notable projects, including the indie gem "Kodachrome," the sci-fi epic "Elysium" starring Matt Damon, Joss Whedon's "Cabin in the Woods," the Netflix series "Tiny Pretty Things," and the soon-to-be-released Netflix comedy-horror "Prom Queen."

Her latest indie feature, "The Invisibles," stars Tim Blake Nelson, Bruce Greenwood, Nathan Alexis, and Gretchen Mol, and is slated for theatrical release on September 20th, 2024. Mary Anne's career is a testament to her versatility and dedication to the craft. Whether she's managing budgets or creating unforgettable stories, she brings a unique blend of humility and talent to every project she touches.

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

IMDB: https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm0913963/?ref=instant_nm_1&q=mary

FEAR STREET: PROM QUEEN 1988 (Feature) – NETFLIX 2024

THE INVISIBLES (Feature) – Independent 2024

GLAMOROUS (Series) – NETFLIX/CBS 2023

13 THE MUSICAL (Feature) – NETFLIX 2022

NIGHTBOOKS (Feature) – NETFLIX 2021

TINY PRETTY THINGS (Series) – NETFLIX 2020

8 MONTHS (TV Movie) – Lifetime 2020
BUFFALOED (Feature) – Independent 2019
IN CONTEMPT (Series) – BET 2019
CODE 8 (Feature) - Independent 2018
NEVER KNOCK (TV Movie) - Syfy 2017
STICKMAN (TV Movie) - Syfy 2017
KODACHROME (Feature) - Netflix 2017
NIGHT BEFORE HALLOWEEN (TV Movie) - Syfy 2016
ARQ (Feature) - Netflix 2016
THE STEPS (Feature) - Independent 2015
LAWRENCE & HOLLOMAN (Feature) Independent 2014
PRIMARY (Indy Feature) – Delfonic Film Company 2014
WORDS AND PICTURES (Indy Feature) 2013
DELETE (4 hour MiniSeries) – Sonar 2013
ELYSIUM (Feature) Media Rights Capital / SONY 2013
THAT BURNING FEELING (Indy Feature) Resonance Films 2013
DONOVAN’S ECHO (Indy Feature) – MTM Inc. 2011
CABIN IN THE WOODS (Feature) MGM 2011
THE THAW (Indy Feature) - Anagram Pictures Inc. 2009
ELIJAH (TV Movie) – Anagram Pictures Inc. 2008 Gemini Award Winner – Best Television Movie
FIDO (Indy Feature) – Anagram Pictures Inc. 2006 Official Selection – Sundance, TIFF, Gerardmer
STEPHEN KING’S KINGDOM HOSPITAL (TV Series) – ABC 2004
DESOLATION SOUND (Indy Feature) – Sleepwalker Films 2003
MR. ST. NICK (TV Movie) - Hallmark /ABC 2002
100 DAYS IN THE JUNGLE (TV Movie) Imagination Films /CTV 2002 Gemini Award Winner – Best Television Movie

Name of qualifying feature film
The Invisibles

Expected release date in 2024:

Festival Premiere Cinequest March 10 2024, Theatrical Release September 20, 2024

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

Theatrical

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

Level Film - Canadian Theatrical Distributor. (also released in Festivals)

Film synopsis

In the midst of a crumbling marriage and a stalled career, Charlie feels increasingly invisible—until he literally starts to disappear. Starring the remarkable Tim Blake Nelson, *The Invisibles* takes us on a visually arresting journey to a parallel dimension where the disappeared co-exist, unnoticed by the real world. As Charlie tries to return to his wife (the mesmerizing Gretchen Mol), he's forced to confront the real reason he disappeared in the first place. Masterfully intertwining the stages of grief and the art of letting go, *The Invisibles* delivers a tapestry of humor, emotion, and depth, challenging us to live in the present and embrace the future, no matter how unpredictable and frightening that can sometimes be.

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

"*The Invisibles*" is a very personal film. It was borne out of a personal crisis that my husband, writer-director Andrew Currie, and I faced over 14 years ago. I was pregnant with twins and went into premature labor at 24 weeks, resulting in the birth of two tiny preemie baby boys. Ten days later, we lost one of our precious boys. That experience and the journey through grief that we both shared, and at times could not share, forms the emotional core of "*The Invisibles*." However, "*The Invisibles*" is not a story about grief or loss – it is a story about hope, resilience, and the will to overcome.

Charlie's journey of literally disappearing reflects a deeper emotional reality many of us face when overwhelmed by life's challenges. Like Charlie and Hanna, Andrew and I each found our path through our grief in different ways, and what we discovered through that journey was that grief is very personal. We also discovered that there are as many stories of loss as there are people on this planet. Whether it is the loss of a loved one, the loss of a career, the loss of our health, or any of the myriad ways that a human being can experience loss, we have all felt it.

"*The Invisibles*" encourages viewers to find strength in their vulnerabilities, confront their emotional traumas, and seek connection and hope in a fragmented world. It's a

reminder that even in our darkest times, the will to overcome and the power of love can guide us back. And I think right now, that is a message that we all need.

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

Like most indie features, it took several years of development and financing to finally find the moment and the path to production. Early in the development process, we attached the incredibly talented Tim Blake Nelson in the role of Charlie. Andrew and I had worked with Tim on the feature film "FIDO" and the mutual respect that we all developed on that film led to Tim quickly agreeing to work with Andrew and I in this role.

Soon after, we attached Lucy Liu in the role of Hanna. With Lucy attached, we quickly made a US sale which meant, at least to us, that we were clearly headed into production. However, the stars were not with us, and other critical pieces of financing did not come together that year.

Tim and Lucy remained committed to the project and when almost 18 months later, we finally secured all of the necessary financing pieces, both were excited to proceed.

Except - Lucy had studio deals and schedules – none of which were particularly keen to adjust to the needs of a tiny indie. Ultimately, it became clear that to move forward and get the film made, we had to let go of Lucy. This opened the door to the incredible cast which we assembled – Gretchen Mol, Nathan Alexis, and Bruce Greenwood, in addition to Tim of course. But it also meant the loss of our US sale and a dramatic change in our budget at the 11th hour. Truly incredible support from the local industry is what filled that gap and allowed us to make the movie that we ultimately did and for that we are forever grateful.

As for highlights, there were many – the casting of each of the performers I mentioned, finding the incredibly talented DP Maya Bankovic, and reuniting with the phenomenal designer Rupert Lazarus. These talented individuals brought their unique vision and expertise, elevating the film to new heights.

Scouting Cambridge in December in the midst of a snowstorm was a memorable adventure. We were searching for the perfect locations, battling the elements to find the ideal settings that would bring our story to life. The dedication and resilience of our team were truly remarkable.

One unforgettable moment was finding the perfect space suit in California. Due to budget constraints, we couldn't afford the shipping costs, so we called in a favor from a friend who used air miles to fly it to Toronto just in time for the shoot. The lengths that crew and friends went to ensure every detail was perfect were just remarkable. Shooting a scene with live fireworks late into a snowy Hamilton night was another challenge.

Every technical problem that could go wrong did go wrong, but our crew's perseverance and creativity shone through. The result was a breathtaking scene that added a magical touch to the film.

Using our own dog, Charlotte, to act in the film because we couldn't afford a 'film dog' was a heartwarming highlight. Charlotte knocked it out of the park, delivering a performance that added genuine warmth and charm. I only wish they gave awards for animal performers!

Perhaps the most emotional moment was shooting a final scene with Tim Blake Nelson in an empty bowling alley. Tim expressed his soul in that scene, and it was so powerful that it brought the entire crew to tears. It was in that moment that we realized how deeply connected we had all become through this journey. By the end of the shoot, everyone felt like part of the same family, bonded by the shared experience of bringing this deeply personal story to life.

Given what a personal story this was, there was one moment I will never forget. There is a scene near the end of the film when Charlie says goodbye to his son Oskar. While we were filming that scene, given the cramped quarters, I wasn't able to watch at the main director monitor. Instead, I was tucked away in a corner by myself, and that was a blessing, because as I watched that farewell, all of the emotion of 14 years earlier came back and I had the most cathartic cry of my life. I think perhaps that cry was the reason I needed to make this film.

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

It is a cliché to refer to Canadians as polite and considerate but that doesn't mean it's not accurate. In spite of all the divisiveness out there right now, we are still a nation that cares about each other and I think a hallmark of Canadian producers is their compassion.

Whether I am producing my own independent film or supporting someone else's vision as a line producer, I approach my work from a place of compassion and empathy. Mostly that's just because it's who I am, partly, because it's the right thing to do. But I've also realized over the years that establishing a nurturing, supportive environment is the only assured way to get the best creative work done and that makes it my priority as a producer.

I believe in the contributions of every member of the team and strive to create an environment where every cast and crew member feels supported and safe. It's not always easy to do that when budgets are tight and schedules short – but it's almost more important under those circumstances.

What defines your body of work?

I love that the medium of film can affect one's perspective and impact viewpoint while simultaneously entertaining. I have always been drawn to telling stories which cause us to take a second look or consider a different angle on something we thought we knew.

All the movies that I have produced share a common thread - they reflect the human experience but in unexpected ways, causing us to reconsider and view the world we live in, those we share it with, and even ourselves, slightly differently.

"The Invisibles" provides a look at the universal human experience of loss but with a unique approach which makes a challenging topic accessible. In sharing the film with festival audiences earlier this year, we met many viewers who were personally impacted by the film and its message of hope. Several times we heard from viewers who had themselves lost someone, about how much the film had affected their ability to process that loss.

In contrast, "Fido" uses satire and dark humor to critique societal norms in a 1950s-like world where zombies are domesticated. This surreal setting combined with a whimsical narrative provides a unique backdrop to subtly address issues such as the treatment of marginalized groups, the search for true human connection, and the importance of empathy. The film's layered storytelling encourages viewers to look beyond the surface humor and consider the deeper social and emotional implications.

In a very different way, my first independent producer credit, "Desolation Sound," explored the destructive nature of envy and jealousy. Psychologically driven, the film delves into the darker aspects of human emotions, showcasing how these feelings can lead to devastating consequences.

As incredibly different as these films are, they share one feature - all present familiar themes through fresh and unexpected lenses, challenging audiences to reconsider their perspectives. This commitment to exploring the complexities of the human experience, coupled with a diverse range of storytelling techniques, defines my work and, I believe, showcases the breadth of my contribution to the Canadian industry.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I find this an interesting question because every producer is by definition, a leader. It's what you do with the responsibility that leadership bestows on you that defines you.

There was a moment over 20 years ago on one of the first films I produced that has never left me. We were on tech survey and everyone was discussing a particular logistics problem. I don't recall the specifics other than it involved the incoming tide, but I will never forget the moment when I opened my mouth with a suggestion, only to see the face of every department head, including the director, turn and focus on what I was about to say. It was an unforgettable split second when I realized I had the floor and that what I was about to say had better matter. I don't think I said anything particularly

profound that day but I have never forgotten the moment and the deep responsibility that came with it.

That responsibility is of course to the creative integrity of the project, and the fiscal realities but it is more than that. It is to provide a safe and respectful space for every person that has trusted you to join the team to do their work. And, it is to do that work in a way that is considerate of the locations and communities where we film, and to our planet.

One thing that makes me stand out as a producer is my commitment to sustainable practices in film. I have integrated these into my productions in significant ways for years. I am an active member of the Ontario Green Screen board, the DGC Ontario Sustainability Committee, and the CMPA Sustainability Committee. I have worked hard, off the set, taking courses to help bolster my effectiveness in these areas and I have spoken often at industry events, working to inspire others to strive for the most sustainable practices possible in our industry. On my most recent film, I was able to encourage our transport, lighting, and locations departments to step outside of their comfort zones, to take some extreme measures to reduce waste and fuel consumption, and we achieved some unheard-of numbers – literally saving 65 MT of CO₂e and diverting 91% of our set waste.

Outside of the industry, I co-founded the Bloor West Foodbank during the pandemic and continue to act as executive director, supporting our team in providing food to over 1000 individuals every week.

Leadership isn't how you act in a single moment, or the way you answer a specific question. It's how you conduct yourself every day; it's the person your team sees when you aren't looking. It is the culmination of all of your acts and I believe that my contribution to the Canadian film and television industry is far more than this most recent film, it is how I have carried myself, and how I have cared for people and the environment for the past 33 years.

Matt Code

Production company(ies)

Wildling Pictures Inc.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Matt Code is an award-winning producer of films and television and president of Wildling Pictures, an Ontario-based production company. Over the past ten years since opening Wildling, Code has produced more than twenty features in addition to numerous shorts and over fifty episodes of television. Code has two films at TIFF 2024: YOUNG WERTHER, the directorial debut of José Avelino Gilles Corbett Lourenço, will have its World Premiere in Special Presentations; and PAYING FOR IT directed by Sook-Yin Lee, written by Lee and Joanne Sarazen and co-produced with Hawkeye Pictures will have its World Premiere in the Platform Program. Previously, Code produced SUZE (Linsey Stewart and Dane Clark's sophomore feature film), which won multiple "Best of" festival awards internationally; SEE FOR ME, which sold to IFC Midnight in the US after premiering at the 2021 Tribeca Festival; and MARY GOES ROUND, which premiered at TIFF 2017.

Not limited to film, Code has produced numerous award-winning TV series. Most recently Code produced MOTORHEADS (created by John A. Norris) for AMAZON and ACCUSED (created by Howard Gordon for Sony) for FOX.

Code is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre's Producers Lab, the Berlinale Talent Lab and Queen's University – where he holds a BAH in Film + Media and Political Studies.

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

<https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm2270508>

Name of qualifying feature film

YOUNG WERTHER

Expected release date in 2024:

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:

TIFF 2024

Film synopsis

A contemporary adaptation of Goethe's smash hit 1774 novel of tragic romance, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

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

Well, one important reason to make this film is that 2024 is the 250th anniversary of the book it was adapted from and it's still with us as an important piece of our cultural history. But for me, it was simply a great script that was both funny, but also offered a whimsy that felt unique in the romantic comedy space. It was reminiscent of indie darlings like *500 Days of Summer* and having worked on a series of darker or more dramatic films I was excited by the opportunity to live in that world for a time. There also seemed to be great opportunities in the market with a romantic comedy given the high demand.

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

This film is perhaps the most challenging I've made to date, which was made all the more so by the fact that we began our work on it essentially in lockstep with the pandemic. In fact, it was only weeks before the first lockdown we officially signed it. However, despite the challenges we've all faced in navigating the funding cycles and market upheaval that ensued, it was also a very ambitious script that precluded it from working on the more modest budgets I had previously been working with. However, we had a first-time director in José, which I knew from the onset would add to the burden of financing it. I think one of the biggest highlights of the film was the wonderful team we were able to assemble behind it, which itself was our solution to the challenges we had identified. We knew having great partners on the sales and financing side, and the cast to attract such partners would be imperative. I engaged an EP, Mason Novick, and a wonderful casting director, Angela Demo, who could help on the cast front and we were able to attach Douglas Booth, Iris Apatow and Patrick J. Adams. We engaged CAA and Mister Smith for sales, and were eventually able to raise over 25% of the budget through private financing.

There were however many challenges. We initially had another actress attached in the co-lead who was unable to continue with the film due to schedule and had to replace her as we tried to close financing ahead of production. Our production timeline had to be accelerated due to the impending SAG strike. And like always, I was wearing many

hats trying to put as much money on screen due to our ambition, working as the lead creative producer and leading production as the line producer. I learned a tremendous amount and am very grateful for the privilege to work on Young Werther and will be forever grateful to Telefilm, Ontario Creates, LevelFILM and Ashland Hill for supporting it and José for trusting Wildling with it.

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

Being Canadian and being independent are the two most important aspects of my identify as a producer to me personally. They are both distinct choices I have made multiple times over as other opportunities have arisen and it is my sincere hope that I will be fortunate enough to be in the position to continue to make them as our industry evolves through the current challenges. I grew up in small rural communities in multiple provinces and I've traveled this country from coast to coast to coast through my life and work. I've also lived and worked in some of its largest cities. I take great pride not only in participating in expressing our identify on the world stage through film, but also in working hard to build ways to take film production and our industry into small communities across Canada so that Canadians can participate in it. That has meant everything from specific neighbourhoods and communities within our largest cities to First Nations in remote areas of our country. The challenges we've overcome to take filming to places it hasn't otherwise been has been a unique and special aspect of my career and the thing I enjoy the most about it.

What defines your body of work?

It's a difficult question for me to answer succinctly, because as a filmmaker and producer I crave challenge and therefore I have pushed myself to work in all mediums, at all budget levels from a few hundred dollars to hundreds of millions, in many genres and with all different types of filmmakers. So the through lines aren't linear. I've also built projects from IP with separate writers and directors and worked on incredibly intimate filmmaker-driven films. But I what I see through all of them is an exploration of the human condition in some form and a catalog of films that felt like they specifically needed my tenacity and perspective in order to happen at that moment in time.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I think I am known as very hardworking and hands on, and that I bring both creative input and a deep understanding of physical production to everything I do. But personally I would define my leadership by my passion for creating opportunity for others to grow and achieve their goals. The greatest joy for me has come from seeing all of the filmmakers, technicians and artists whose careers have developed with the opportunities my productions have created for them. I've always taken great care to give

a cinematographer or composer or gaffer a first opportunity to step up and take that role, but then also made sure our teams were balanced with experience and been able to support them. That passion for creating opportunity also manifests in my work with the CMPA, LIFT, various mentorship programs, festivals and other groups where I've put my effort into maintaining and improving our larger filmmaking ecosystem in Canada.

Michael Sparaga

Production company(ies)

Victory Man Productions

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Michael is an award-winning, critically acclaimed Canadian screenwriter, director and producer whose films have screened in top-tier international festivals and sold the world over. His production company, Victory Man Productions, founded in 2004, was formed with the mandate to produce thought-provoking and commercially viable television programs and feature films. Victory Man's scripted projects include the superhero-comedy Sidekick (Maple Pictures/Warner Home Video), the workplace-comedy Servitude (eOne) and the climate-themed thriller Humane (Paramount/IFC Films/Elevation Pictures). Feature documentaries include The Missing Ingredient (Netflix) and United We Fan (Super Channel/Blue Ice Docs). When not producing under his own banner, Michael works with other filmmakers as a story editor or screenwriter.

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

<https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm1618293/>

Name of qualifying feature film

Humane

Expected release date in 2024:

April 26, 2024

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

Theatrical

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

Elevation Pictures (CAN), IFC Film (US)

Film synopsis

In the wake of an environmental collapse that is forcing humanity to shed 20% of its population, a family dinner erupts into chaos when a father's plan to enlist in the government's new euthanasia program goes horribly awry.

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

I've been on pins and needles about climate change since I first read about the hole in the ozone layer as a teenager. I immediately organized the first Earth Day events at my high school and pushed my family to be early adopters of the fledgling Blue Box program. As a filmmaker, I'm attracted to projects that tackle environmental issues head on. I penned the initial drafts of the family film *Kayak to Klemtu* (Scythia Films) about a First Nation's girl fighting against an oil pipeline in the Great Bear Rainforest. Inspired by the positive impact that film had upon its release, which included winning the 2017 People's Choice award at imagineNATIVE Film Festival, I sat down to write *Humane*, a film about a chaotic family dinner that takes place in the wake of a global environmental collapse. This is not a world where any lobbyist or politician cynically questions climate change. That time has passed. It's a world where humanity is united in their efforts to answer for their sins against the planet. Although I wrote the script before the pandemic, it took on a prescient tone once the world shut down and we all witnessed firsthand who wins and loses in the event of a global crisis. For a thriller, I'm proud of the discussions *Humane* has spurred in audiences and the media. There are TikToks with thousands of responses with people debating how they would respond in a similar dire situation. The New York Times called it "a strangely sticky story, one that lingered after the movie was over," and Variety raved that it is a "searing domestic thriller about crimes of the not-so-distant future."

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

There were so many highs and lows producing *Humane*. The day we cast our first star was certainly a high. It meant we could finally lock our production dates. The day the interest rates skyrocketed to unprecedented levels was certainly a low. There went our interest reserve and a chunk of our contingency.

But I'd say the greatest highlight was securing *Humane*'s director. Caitlin Cronenberg was the first person I thought of for the job. She and I had worked together previously; Caitlin was my stills and gallery photographer on a production back in 2011. I followed her career as a visual artist over the years, even bought her coffee table book, *The Endings*, and was blown away by a short film she directed based on that book. The email I sent to Caitlin contained the Subject line: Have you ever thought of directing a feature? It ends up, she had. In fact, she had been approached by many producers over the years, all the heavy hitters, and had read dozens of scripts. But none of the scripts had stuck with her. Until *Humane*. She said it was the first script that scared her for the future of her family, and she just had to direct it. I was thrilled to be able to secure my first choice to direct *Humane*, but the hard work was only just beginning.

Which leads into the greatest challenge, which is the same challenge faced by all producers not bankrolled by an equity group: financing the film. My first budget for *Humane* came in north of CAD 5 million. Everyone told me that was unrealistic for a Canadian first feature. They told me funders wouldn't allow it, to think smaller. They said: drop characters, cast unknowns, shoot it up north. But I knew what I had on my hands. This was Caitlin Cronenberg's debut feature. It was a genre script that took place in an affluent big city world. I couldn't allow the film's prospects to be limited from the get-go by a low budget. So, before we took it to Telefilm for production funding, we took the project out to the market, with no cast attached, and the market delivered. We had several offers on the table for international sales, eventually agreeing to a deal with IFC Films.

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

To date, all of the projects I produce originate with me. My documentary films, which I also direct, are all based on subjects that caught my interest. My scripted productions are all based on my own original screenplays. For these productions, I hire my directors, and continue to be involved in all aspects of production. From casting all the way through to delivery and audit. In TV, it's called showrunning. In feature films, it's uncommon, and it's definitely been a cause for concern for funders used to doing things a certain way. But I've been able to make a career out of it and I wouldn't have it any other way.

What defines your body of work?

I make movies that examine the innerworkings of unique, tight-knit communities. Whether it's a dysfunctional family (*Humane*), or exploited co-workers (*Servitude*), or avid fans of a television series (*United We Fan*), or generations of restaurant regulars (*The Missing Ingredient*), community is always fundamental to both my scripted and documentary projects. From a storytelling perspective, there's intrinsic drama in community. It's active, not passive. It's vital to one's identity. It's something one chooses for oneself through a process of self-discovery. It can be an agent of change, where members are engaged in the struggle for justice and well-being of the whole. It can also be an agent of destruction, either when members of a community turn against their fellow members, or when people of power come along and ruin the community, causing members pain and suffering. Stories about community are universal. Everyone belongs to a community, often more than one, with the demands of one often conflicting with the demands of another. When I start down the road of developing a new project, I always examine each character through a community lens.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I lead by example. I write, produce, direct and, when necessary, even finance and distribute my projects. When funding agencies say no, I don't let it stop me.

My first feature, the Toronto-set superhero movie Sidekick, was a true Canadian indie success story. After I was turned down by Telefilm for development funding, I went ahead and funded the movie myself on my credit cards and line of credit. Shot on weekends with a volunteer army of cast and crew, Sidekick went on to sell in multiple international territories and its remake rights were even acquired by Universal's Focus Features (after I cold mailed them a VHS cassette of the rough cut!). When it came time to find an audience for Sidekick, I sent a Hail Mary email to Telefilm asking them to fund a cross-Canada theatrical tour. Miraculously, they agreed. I created press lists, mailed the poster to every comic book store in the country, and set off in a car for Halifax with the one and only 35mm print of the film. The media attention I was able to garner along the way was staggering. When I returned home from Vancouver a month later, I was not only contacted by every Canadian distributor, but also by seemingly every other young filmmaker anxious for advice on DIY production and distribution.

Luckily, I thought to film my cross-country exploits. I even took to the streets to ask everyday Canadians about their thoughts on Canadian film. That footage, intertwined with interviews with film industry professionals, became the basis for my next project, Maple Flavour Films, a TV hour documentary about the current state of the Canadian film industry. Making Maple Flavour Films taught me that Canadians are hungry for Canadian movies, but they want those movies to give them the laughs, thrills and excitement that films from other countries give them. And that's what I've aimed to do with my career as a filmmaker.

Paul Barkin

Production company(ies)

Alcina Pictures Ltd.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Paul Barkin has been actively producing feature films through his company Alcina Pictures since 1998. A champion of director-driven, and often first-time filmmakers, Paul has produced an array of critically acclaimed and commercially successful films over the last 25 years. Selected credits include Cherien Dabis' Sundance and Cannes entry AMREEKA nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards including Best Picture, Bruce McDonald's award-winning THE TRACEY FRAGMENTS, Su Rynard's Alfred P. Sloan Prize winner KARDIA, Jeff Renfroe's ice-age apocalypse THE COLONY starring Laurence Fishburne and Bill Paxton, the Nordic revenge thriller HEVN by Kjersti Steinsbø, Jasmin Mozafarri's 2018 breakout debut FIRECRACKERS, and most recently Danis Goulet's Indigenous sci-fi debut NIGHT RAIDERS, nominated for eleven Canadian Screen Awards including Best Picture and Executive Produced by Taika Waititi.

Currently Barkin is in post-production on Jason Buxton's (Blackbird) highly anticipated feature SHARP CORNER starring Ben Foster and Cobie Smulders will mark its World Premiere as a Special Presentation at TIFF '24 is distributed by Elevation Pictures and sold Internationally by Neon.

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

Paul Barkin (IMDb) <https://pro.imdb.com/name/nm0055050>

2024 SHARP CORNER, Producer, dir. Jason Buxton

2023 I USED TO BE FUNNY, Executive Producer, dir. Ally Pankiw

2022 MIDNIGHT AT THE PARADISE, Executive Producer, dir. Vanessa Matsui

2021 NIGHT RAIDERS, Producer, (Canada-New Zealand), dir. Danis Goulet

2018 FIRECRACKERS, Executive Producer, dir. Jasmin Moza ari

2015 HEVN (REVENGE), Producer (Canada-Norway), dir. Kjersti Steinsbø

2013 THE COLONY Producer. dir. Je Renfroe

2010 THE CON ARTIST, Producer, dir. Risa Bramon Garcia

2009 AMREEKA, Producer, dir. Cherien Dabis

2007 THE TRACEY FRAGMENTS, Executive Producer, dir. Bruce McDonald.

2005 KARDIA, Producer, dir. Su Rynard

2000 APARTMENT HUNTING, Producer, dir. Bill Robertson

Name of qualifying feature film

SHARP CORNER

Expected release date in 2024:

TIFF, AIFF

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

Theatrical

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

Elevation Pictures

Film synopsis

SHARP CORNER is the story of a man's spiral as he tries to find greater purpose in his life. It follows Josh, a hapless family man who becomes drawn into saving the lives of the car crash victims at the sharp corner in front of his house. As Josh's obsession takes hold, he places his wife and son in jeopardy and setting in motion a series of events that threaten to break his family apart.

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

SHARP CORNER is a film that is relatable to many. Like many, it is the story of an everyday man who has lost his way and needs to find a way out. A way to better his life. A new path. A need to be someone. To be a hero. Living life is complicated.

While the story is unique and provocative, what was most important to making this film was because of Jason Buxton. He is a talent that had such an amazing breakout in 2012 with his film BLACKBIRD, that it was unbelievable that he had not been able to follow up on his impressive debut. This is what i care about most - about our Canadian talent reaching their potential. While i know there were attempts to get this second feature made, it just wasn't happening for him. He deserved his chance to get to the next level and i wanted to make sure it happened. I did not know him before we met on this project. but when i read his script, and heard what he had to say and why, I felt compelled to support him and push, the way i do, to get his film made. Filmmaking is such an important craft and way a culture can advance ideas and thought. Jason proved that ability with Blackbird but he needed that next step. He's a bonafide talent in

Atlantic Canada and that needed to be embraced and supported. Its good for us to get behind these talents because if we don't get behind them, we will lose them and we will potentially could be missing something from our own culture. I wanted to make sure this guy got the follow up he was due . He had an amazing script that could be financed and made at a higher level. I could position him and the film as a national film and I knew that i could raise the stakes for him to put him on a global stage.

I am very excited to be presenting this film as a World Premiere and Special Presentation this year at TIFF . I am proud of Jason and pleased because this was the goal that i set out to do 5 years ago. Get it made at the level and set him up for success. time will tell, but as a producer this is what we do. this is what is important. this is what it is all about.

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

After admiring Jason Buxtons' award-winning film Blackbird, and impressed with his success, it wasn't until 2018 that I was introduced to Jason by a colleague who read Sharp Corner and thought it was an exceptional screenplay which she thought would be perfect for me to produce - she was right! The script was special - it was bold, slightly off-putting but enriched with strong, and relatable and timely themes. After discussing Jason's intent and vision, seeing his passion and how he wanted to explore the themes, I was intrigued!

Jason was a filmmaker who had an incredible breakout debut, yet was struggling to get his second feature made. He needed the right partner. He needed someone who could embrace his vision and be able to take his work to the next level.

Over the next two years, we honed the final script, raised financing, attached distribution and started packaging the elements. Then COVID hit. We were sidelined for 2 years.

Building it back up with partners Marc T & Jason L in Nova Scotia, things moved forwards in 2022. We raised the budget, leased land and built an entire house (save for a permanent foundation and plumbing). We were dressed and ready to shoot until we ran up against the SAG strike which delayed production from Spring to Fall. But as filmmakers do, we turned lemons into lemonade and ended up with great lead cast in Ben Foster & Cobie Smulders, a stellar crew, and the most perfect weather and conditions to shoot the film.

There were several wins and losses through the entire production, but in the end we were tenacious, resourceful, with a dedicated team of supporters, and partnerships that helped make the film happen.

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

I am proud to be part of a very tenacious group of creative, resourceful and incredibly skilled group of creative business types whom define themselves as Canadian feature film producers. Blessed with some of the most robust financial resources and tools available anywhere, Canadian producers dance a complex ballet to realize a film into production. It's that very unique dance that makes what we do as Canadian producers special. In Canada we straddle a cultural imperative, diverse and visionary talent with market forces, government bureaucracy, market demands, and manage creatives, funders, sales reps and distributors - all in the same breath. Everyone has a say, everyone has divergent agenda and we as producers have to make everyone feel they are part of the same experience. Everyone wants to be there for one reason or the other and it's our job, as producers to make sure everyone has a good time at the party.

It's virtually impossible and amazing that it gets done. Yet as a feature producer in Canada, this is what we do and only we know how to do it. I think that what we all like about it. We do it. We get it done. We take the risk. We stand by our filmmakers. With our teams of people and make everyone feel proud to be part of the show. Sometimes it's thankless. Sometimes we are thanked. Sometimes we make money. Sometimes we don't. But we care about what we do. We care about the people, the talent, and most importantly to bring to life stories we want to tell, and which will leave forever leave a lasting impression on audiences and our national culture for generations to come.

What defines your body of work?

I don't have a particular genre I gravitate towards. I am genre agnostic and tend to be a chameleon about the films and stories I choose to make. But what links my work together is that they are undoubtedly, director-driven films. Stories fresh with ideas, aspiring to new heights and made with an audience in mind. I seek out filmmakers with distinctive voices, compelling stories to tell and stories that I know can find intelligent audiences in a commercial way.

My approach is filmmaker-centric from the get go extending from development, packaging, production and through to exhibition. I plan resources around needs of the project and the filmmaker seeking the best opportunities to reach the objectives of the film.

You only make a film once. As the producer, it is incumbent upon me to strive for the best possible path to serve the filmmaker's vision. Sometimes this means reaching beyond our means to get the most for the film. Taking that extra step. PUSHING THE ENVELOPE. Choosing the perfect setting. Going after that un-gettable cast. Ensuring the financing is there to support an elevated film. One needs to be smart about it the approach, but often is the case that with risk there is reward. Dividends for the film, the filmmaker and for audiences.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I care deeply about my profession as an independent film producer and the long-term growth and success of feature film in Canada.

Producing is far more than a job, a role, or profession. It is a commitment to an industry which I, alongside my peers are the custodians of a giant content machine – the institution of our national cinema – leading a path for talent and creators for Canadians alike to reflect upon themselves, embrace their identity & culture and be entertained. To maintain and preserve this institution is of the utmost importance to me. It comes in at least two ways; To mentor others and share knowledge that leads to success; to fulfill a commitment to ensure the path to produce films is successfully maintained so others can continue to have opportunity and success.

I thrive on mentoring others and have supported several emerging producers and filmmakers throughout my career. My mentees have run the gamut of students, employees, colleagues, filmmakers and partners. It is rewarding to see these individuals launch their own careers and hope my contribution has made a lasting impression to their success. Knowledge is an equity that continues to grow and giving back from my own experience is an investment into others which I believe benefits us all.

Over the last several years, I have taken on more of an advocacy role in our feature film community. I have advised, sat on committees, researched and worked other stakeholders to tackle provincial and national issues to help foster a healthy and stable future for feature film. I enjoy diving into issues that serve the betterment of all. I don't shy away at speaking my mind but at the same time value listening to the ideas of others and embracing opinions to form consensus amongst a group. This type of work is of the utmost importance in my career and by sharing with others my own experience I hope to provide insight and knowledge that help common goals.

Quentin Lee

Production company(ies)

Margin Films Ltd.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Winner of 2024 Canadian Screen Awards and the 2020 Roddenberry Foundation Impact Awards for TV creators, a member of the Producers Guild of America, Canadian Media Producers Association and Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (Directors and Producers Peer Group) and a two-time recipient of Canada Council Media Arts grants, Quentin Lee is a multimedia creator and has directed and produced over ten feature films and created over three TV series. His first feature Shopping For Fangs (co-directed with Justin Lin) premiered at Toronto International Film Festival and became a cult classic as part of the Asian American New Wave Class of 1997. His latest Canadian Content TV series Comedy Invasion won Best Comedy Special at the 2024 Canadian Screen Awards.

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

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0004250>

Name of qualifying feature film

Rez Comedy

Expected release date in 2024:

October 11, 2024

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

Theatrical

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

Margin Films Ltd.

Film synopsis

Rez Comedy is the first all Indigenous and all Canadian stand-up comedy documentary concert feature where 8 diverse Indigenous comics each perform a short set hosted by

Keith Nahanee, star of "Comedy Invasion: Rez Style" which won Best Comedy Special at the 2024 Canadian Screen Awards.

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

The feature was originally developed as a TV series funded into development by APTN and CMF. When APTN dropped the series from production, I loaned a portion of my son's college fund into the company to turn it into an independent feature with 9 of the original cast of the series.

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

The main challenge was no one supported the film even when the team got a 2024 Canadian Screen Award nomination for Best Comedy Special. ISO turned the project down for funding. Creative BC turned the feature down for funding. Telefilm's Talent to Watch deemed the feature ineligible due to its genre. Canada Council for the Arts deemed the feature ineligible due to its genre. I had no choice but to put in some of my 8-year-old son's college fund to finance the production on a loan.

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

All my films and series are about the search for identity which is an important theme to the Canadian identity, defining me as a producer. Also take-no-for-an-answer DIY spirit of pioneering Canadian filmmakers define me to this date.

What defines your body of work?

The constant search for identity whether it is emotional or cultural runs through all my works which all center BIPOC and/queer main characters.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

Fearlessness and willing to finish a project at any responsible cost defines me as a leader in Canadian and independent media production.

Shayne Putzlocher

Production company(ies)

Trilight Entertainment Inc.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Shayne has worked in both producing and production for the film and television industries for the past 20 years. With over 35 feature films and 200 episodes of television experience, Shayne works in all aspects of production, including script development, financing, pre-production through to final delivery, sales and collections.

Based on his experience and his relationship-building in the sector, Shayne founded his production company, Trilight Entertainment, in 2009. Since its inception, the company has successfully produced multiple films and a television series for the international market and has continuously adapted and grown its capacity as a major production entity in Canada.

His production and financing experience has contributed to strong relationships with numerous partners around the world including investors, bankers, distributors, sales companies and funding agencies.

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

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1780740/?ref=ext_shr_lnk

Name of qualifying feature film

We Kill Them All

Expected release date in 2024:

December 1st, 2024

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

Streaming service

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

Filmooption International

Film synopsis

In the remote mountains of Colorado, Lee Hughes readies the resort he oversees in the off-season for the arrival of his estranged daughter, Megan. His criminal lifestyle contributed to the gradual unravelling of their relationship, as his wife's death left him incapable of raising a young Megan. Megan, reluctant to spend the weekend with her father, is encouraged by her girlfriend, Lane, to make the trip. Upon arrival, Megan and Lane find three men from her father's past have tracked Lee down in search of cash he made off with after a heist years prior. With Lee dead, Megan and Lane's badly timed weekend throw them into a cat and mouse chase in an empty lodge and miles from help.

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

Over the years, Trilight Entertainment Inc. has produced a wide range of genres. From family-focused films to dramas and most recently a long line-up of holiday romance. I've paid close attention to the market and its constantly changing nature. Based on conversations and follow-ups with the buyers and distributors we've worked closely with over the years, the action/thriller genre is currently proven to be in highest demand. However, we didn't want to make the classic thriller. We wanted to incorporate another important element into the film; one that we knew to be relevant in our diverse and constantly evolving industry. Giving the film two lesbian leads, showcasing the characters' survival against all odds, was something we felt was important. Despite our understanding the film may not be sold in a select few territories, and several distributors' who advised against it, we felt it meant more to make something unique and bold, and advocate for the LGBTQ community with a front and centre approach.

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

Once we decided to produce a thriller in the harsh climate of a Saskatchewan winter, we knew we needed a script that could be completed with a small crew and on a smaller budget. We got the ball rolling with the first draft of the script completed in November of 2023 and a principal photography date set for March 12th of 2024.

Locking the financing for the film was our first priority, as we didn't have a lot of time between our commitment to produce the movie to our goal of mid March production. While we locked the financing, we had a contract for the location underway. It unexpectedly fell through, which meant a scout for a resort that offered the style and resources to match our story had to begin again. There aren't a lot to choose from in the province, so we were under the gun. When we finally locked a new location, a full rewrite had to happen with a deadline of one week. When it came time to shoot, the script had gone through five major rewrites, two separate and very involved location

contracts and a highway closure due to one of the province's worst snowstorms in history on the day all cast and crew travelled to the remote location.

Quality has always been something I pride myself on when delivering any of my films, but I knew this was going to be a different kind of challenge. A lot of our crew, including the director and a few cast members, had minimal to no experience in the industry. We knew they would be thrown into the fire having to shoot a high-action thriller in the elements and in only thirteen days. I was able to dial down a budget and create a workable schedule, the challenge was going to be the execution of many stunt-heavy, intimate scenes that would be mentally, physically and emotionally draining on both cast and crew. We had a big-budget movie on the legs of a low-budget agency. What we wrapped with at the end of thirteen very fast, very demanding days was the makings of a fantastic, thrilling and emotionally charged film that pulses with the tireless efforts of a dedicated and focussed team of professionals. When we completed the edits, after many of the challenges we faced, the end result surpassed all expectations. I couldn't be prouder to have this film a part of my achievements as a producer.

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

I have been consistently producing films in Canada for the past fifteen years. In this time, I've experienced the great success that comes when the industry is charged with an abundance of opportunities. On the other hand, as is the case in such an unpredictable industry, I've also pushed through the inevitable limitations when the market recedes to challenging conditions. Resilience is a trait I've learned to master over the course of my work and pride myself on what I've contributed to the Canadian market despite the obstacles we producers face. However, the thing I've learned going through the fluctuations of success and failure, is that you're only as good as the people you have at your table.

Building a constantly growing family of trust-worthy and hard-working professionals who have your back is crucial to growth. This is why it's been my goal to stretch to every corner of Canada and give opportunities to dedicated and passionate up-and-comers who wouldn't normally be given the chance. Training and mentorship have been a major tool in the success of my company. Limiting my team to a select few also limits the flexibility I have for locations and a strong family of future potential crew and cast. By allowing people opportunities expands Canadian's film professional pool if even in the smallest way. In my experience, the opportunities have produced incredibly eager and diligent individuals. To date, I have given ten people first time director roles, trained and mentored fifteen producers and countless individuals to fill all roles in every department. Several small communities across British Columbia, Yukon, Ontario and Saskatchewan have benefited both economically and artistically when we brought our productions into their towns and allowed businesses and locals to benefit financially

while also getting their names on the map. As a producer, leaning on inexperienced individuals can be a challenge, but it's the end product that has proven to be an incredibly positive gain for myself, my team and the long list of our growing relationships who have gone on to work on many other productions for other producers. I look forward to expanding these opportunities to Newfoundland, Northwest Territories, and other Western Canadian towns such as, most recently, Quesnel and Wells/Barkerville area. Canada is too vast, diverse and breathtaking a place to not showcase every corner of it, while also opening the industries' door to other Canadian minds, talents and the persevering and tireless work ethic we pride ourselves for. I count my contribution to that effort as a great achievement and will continue to implement that in my model in every future production.

What defines your body of work?

To me, a producer begins as the backbone of every film and ends as the overseer of a larger enterprise. Taking a concept or script from the cradle to the grave isn't linear, it's the evolution of many moving parts. The body of a production grows exponentially from beginning to end. To take on the responsibility of a producer is to take the skills you've built and have trust in a constantly transitioning process, placing that trust in a multiplying team and unexpected elements. You must learn how to maintain a smooth-running operation from a distance that instills confidence in your team and the entire production while finishing with a product that will succeed. Producers put a lot at stake when they commit to a project, which is why the most important trait a producer has is the ability to juggle multiple roles at varying degrees.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

Since the day I created my company, I've kept my head down and prioritized building a quality library of films and excellent relationships with many individuals in the industry. The most notable and crucial of relationships would be the one I have developed with all the investors in every one of my films. Financing films in this way becomes personal and raises the risks substantially, which is why it's often easier avoided in the funding process. When it comes to financing, the cornerstone for success has always been the priority for me to protect investor money. This reputation has maintained the important relationships necessary for past and future productions. It's always been the integrity and trust at the foundation of every one of my films that has been the catalyst for my company and the groundwork for the producer I've become. Over the course of the past fifteen years every investor has seen a return on their money, which has secured the inclusion of a high percentage of private sector funding. It took several years from humble beginnings and trial and error to fine-tuning an effective budgeting and financing system that doesn't fail. I've found that to be successful in the business of

production, you must be an expert of all facets. This includes budgets and financing, scheduling and casting, outstanding relationships with essential players at every phase of each project, an inside and out knowledge of sales and distribution and an active attendance to as many markets as possible. Though I understand most of these responsibilities are contracted out to others, I found leadership requires expert knowledge at every level. Committing to entirely understanding every function in film outside of a producer's role has given me the security that comes from a wide breadth of knowledge.

To me, to become a leader as a Canadian independent producer there had to be a history of failure followed by a response to learn to survive the same challenges with an arsenal of knowledge. I've made it my mission to create productions that not only succeed but do so with great respect to the complexities of the process. I've generated a reputation in which industry professionals seek me out for consultation on all fronts and I leave my door open, regardless of my schedule, to offer my help at any stage.

Terry Greenlaw

Production company(ies)

Picture Plant Limited

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

One of the first female independent producers in Atlantic Canada, Terry has been a partner in Nova Scotia based production company Picture Plant since 1988.

Notable producer credits include the 13-episode dramatic series Gullage's (CBC); multi-Gemini nominated MOW One Heart Broken Into Song (CBC); feature documentary The Man of a Thousand Songs (Super Channel/CBC, TIFF, Atlantic Film Festival awards for Audience Choice, Outstanding Direction and Best Documentary); indie feature film Hard Drive (Super Channel/Netflix USA) and two seasons of the dramatic mini-series Studio Black! (CBC, nominated for Best Limited Series Canadian Screen Award, winner of NS Screen Award for Best TV Series). Her feature Dawn, Her Dad & The Tractor (pre-sold to CRAVE), was the winner of the 2022 NS Masterworks Arts Award. Her recent film Bystanders, a debut feature by Koumbie, won the FIN Festival Award for Best Screenplay and, having completed a Canada wide theatrical release courtesy of Vortex Media, is now available on Super Channel. Terry recently completed Christmas Island, a TV movie co-production with Vortex for the Hallmark Channel, scoring one of the highest viewer ratings for the channel in 2023. Her current feature film, Monica's News, a first feature by Pamela Gallant, was the 2019 WIDC Feature Film Award recipient (a production prize worth over 250k) and is heading into its Festivals run.

Terry is developing several film and television projects through Picture Plant, including co-productions with partners in Canada, the UK, Belgium/Netherlands and Germany, along with a slate of debut feature films being written and/or directed by Nova Scotia women. Terry has two films green-lit by Telefilm with production slated for 2025.

Terry is the recipient of a WIFT Atlantic Wave Award in recognition of her mentorship and was twice nominated for the Canadian Media Producers Association Experienced Producer Award (2021 & 2022), She was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal in recognition of her cultural contribution to Nova Scotia - "Terry is a powerful advocate for promoting stories from this region. Her efforts enrich the cultural life of the province while growing our economy through a robust film industry."

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

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0339109/?ref=fn_al_nm_2

Name of qualifying feature film
MONICA'S NEWS

Expected release date in 2024:
Atlantic International Film Festival September 2024

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

Name of theatrical distributor, film festival or streaming service releasing or exhibiting qualifying film:
Atlantic International Film Festival, Calgary International Film Festival

Film synopsis

It's 1974, the year before International Women's Year, and in the outlying Nova Scotia village of Millman, most continue to live their lives defined by tradition. But gutsy and idealistic nine-year-old CASEY RICHARDS isn't one of them. She wants the same rights and privileges as her older brother. She wants a bike with gears, and she's willing to do what it takes to earn the money to buy one.

While Casey discovers income and independence with her new paper route, she also witnesses a traumatic event. Her teenage cousin and idol, charismatic MONICA, rebels against her religious father CHESTER and he beats her mercilessly. When Monica later goes missing, and then tragically, her lifeless body is discovered in the river, Casey is devastated. Some villagers believe Monica accidentally drowned, while others believe the teenager she was dating murdered her. But Casey knows the truth. When she brazenly accuses her uncle of killing his own daughter, her family reacts vehemently. They try everything in their power to silence her, even stripping her of her paper route.

Months later, relegated to babysit the newborn granddaughter of a fiercely independent and ornery older widow HAZEL, Casey finds an unlikely ally and comes to believe the woman's granddaughter is Monica's reincarnation. The mysteries surrounding Monica's death have quieted, but Casey refuses to forget. She confronts Chester, one more time...

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

Although MONICA'S NEWS is set in 1974, many of the societal and political issues explored in the story remain of urgent concern today, 50 years later. Violence against women, domestic abuse, economic challenges, suppression of women's voices and equal opportunity are all worthy of the conversations that we hope this film will

encourage. And - this is Pamela Gallant's first feature film and I was eager to help her bring it to fruition!

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

Writer-Director Pamela Gallant first approached me to join the MONICA'S NEWS production team in the capacity of Executive Producer. After two unsuccessful attempts to secure Telefilm financing, the producing team evolved and I became the Producer of the film. MONICA'S NEWS was the winner of the WIDC Feature Film (production) Award and received Telefilm support as a result of its third entry for which I had to be granted an exception to the eligibility rules in play. Being Pamela's first feature film, we did not receive marketplace support. As a result, the financing was challenging, given this is a 1970s period drama that features a nine-year old actor in every scene. We achieved the script in 19 days of filming, despite being on location in the hardest hit area during the summer of 2023 rainfall flooding. I am grateful to the industry partners that stepped up through the WIDC Award to support this film at the time of the strikes that challenged their ability to be generous. The highlight for me is heading into the final day of mixing today - a moment that brings the entire team's creativity together to be witnessed on the big screen for the first time! I look forward to taking MONICA'S NEWS to market!

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

I have been producing Canadian stories since 1988. The feature films, documentaries and television programs I have produced have been seen around the world and have been celebrated in retrospectives in Toronto, Paris, Melbourne and Ottawa. I am proud to have been presented the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal in recognition of my cultural contribution to Nova Scotia - "Terry is a powerful advocate for promoting stories from this region. Her efforts enrich the cultural life of the province while growing our economy through a robust film industry."

I want to tell stories that reflect the many ways of being Canadian.

What defines your body of work?

My body of work is varied. My early career was focussed on producing work written and directed by my partner, William D. MacGillivray (LIFE CLASSES et al). These films form the spine of the Picture Plant portfolio. Being one of the first women producers in Atlantic Canada, I recall how difficult it was to have a 'seat at the table' and so over the past 5+ years, I have also added to my producing slate the first feature films by Nova Scotia women (DAWN, HER DAD & THE TRACTOR, BYSTANDERS, MONICA'S NEWS and others greenlit/in development). I am attracted to auteur filmmakers and strong stories. I have produced feature dramas, feature documentaries that have a personal POV, as

well as unusual television series that have attracted a notable viewership. I am also producing larger feature films, including one that is currently in 'on hold' status with Telefilm and also including international co-productions with partners in the UK, Belgium, Netherlands and Germany.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

Over the course of my thirty six year career, I have made films in the Canadian Arctic with the Inuit, with the Black community of Nova Scotia, with the LGBTQ community, with both experienced and emerging filmmakers, and these films have been seen around the world. I have produced films that have been invited to all of the major Canadian film festivals, including 6 TIFF invites. These films have been programmed in retrospectives in Canada and abroad and several are included in the film studies curricula of several Canadian universities. I am the Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of WIFT-AT and head its fundraising committee. I sit on the government advocacy/funding guidelines advisory committee of Screen Nova Scotia. I collaborate with m Canadian colleagues and actively represent Canada at international markets and other industry initiatives. I mentor emerging filmmakers and producers and in particular have a long-standing relationship with Nova Scotia's Black creators.

Yanick Létourneau

(with support from Leslie Dabit and Pierre Villepelet)

Production company(ies)

Peripheria

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Yanick Létourneau, a co-founder of Montreal-based PERIPHERIA, has been at the forefront of promoting diverse storytelling for more than 20 years. His notable work includes Philippe Lacôte's Academy Award-shortlisted Best International Film 'Night of the Kings', celebrated at several international festivals including Venice, TIFF and Sundance. He has earned over time a reputation for his strong commitment to both social issues and artistic excellence. Upcoming films includes Maxime Giroux's 'In Cold Light,' Jean-Claude Barny's 'Fanon,' and Ariel Nasr's "Daudistan" (winner of the TIFF CBC Films Screenwriters Award 2024) continuing his legacy of fostering innovative and impactful narratives.

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

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1233299/>

Name of qualifying feature film

In Cold Light

Expected release date in 2024:

Autumn-Winter

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

Theatrical

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

Elevation Pictures in Canada and Entract Films in Quebec. XYZ is the international sales agent. Universal is the international distributor (except US and Canada) (confidential).

Film synopsis

The night crackles with the energy of an urban rodeo. Fresh out of prison, AVA's (28) attempt to rejoin her growing drug operation is obliterated when her brother TOM (28) is murdered in front of her. Ava runs for her life. Scrambling into the chaos of the city, now consumed by the rodeo in full swing, Ava fights to expose the men hunting her. But when she discovers Tom has left behind a 6-month-old daughter, Ava is forced onto a collision course with her unsympathetic father IKE (55), desperately in need of his help and safety. Fighting to protect her family and committed to staying alive, Ava is eventually taken up north to face the mysterious figure behind her tortured night.

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

"In Cold Light" was a significant film for our team, driven by the ambition of marking a milestone in Canadian cinema. My goal was to create a feature that could compete with top international films while maintaining a unique Canadian identity, and to establish Maxime Giroux as an international A-list filmmaker.

As a producer, I had long sought to collaborate on a bigger-budget, more commercial director-driven feature that could resonate both in Canada and abroad. Frustrated by previous films that, while successful on the festival circuit and with critics, only reached a niche audience, I was inspired by the successes of Denis Villeneuve and Jean-Marc Vallée. Mike MacMillan from Ontario's Lithium Studios and I shared the same vision and some of the same frustrations, leading us to partner on this project. He brought the script, written by Patrick Whistler, and I brought the director, Maxime Giroux, and Quebec's "savoir faire." Maxime, with his strong track record, was the ideal choice for this project. Despite his commercial and critical success in Quebec, his films had limited exposure outside the province due to the language barrier. This project was the perfect opportunity to bridge that gap.

"In Cold Light" is important for several reasons. Firstly, it is a 100% Canadian feature showcasing some of the best talent in the country. The majority of the creative team and crew came from Quebec and are long-time collaborators of Maxime Giroux. The collaboration between an anglophone screenwriter, a Quebecois director, and a Quebec-led coproduction with Ontario, shot in Alberta and Montreal, exemplifies the diverse and rich talent pool within Canada. In terms of diversity and representing Canada, the film's intercultural approach further emphasized its Canadian identity. This film was ambitious not just for Canada but especially for Quebec, as it represents to my knowledge, the province's first high-budget project helmed by an established director like Maxime Giroux in a long while.

The film also serves as a platform to highlight Canadian cinema on the global stage, as it was recently bought for international distribution by Universal (confidential). It was our first collaboration with Hollywood actors, including a strong female lead played by

Maika Monroe and diverse representation with a deaf and non-speaking character portrayed by Troy Kotsur. This project allowed us to create an auteur-driven film with the appeal of a commercial blockbuster, blending artistic vision with broad accessibility. "In Cold Light" demonstrates the potential of Canadian cinema, pushing boundaries and setting new standards for future projects.

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

The making of "In Cold Light" was a complex yet rewarding journey, marked by strategic collaborations and overcoming numerous challenges. The project began with a shared vision between myself, Yanick Letourneau of Peripheria, and Mike MacMillan from Ontario's Lithium Studios. We both wanted to create a bigger-budget, more commercial director-driven feature that could resonate in Canada and abroad. Mike brought the script, written by Patrick Whistler, and I brought the director, Maxime Giroux.

Maxime Giroux, with his strong track record in Quebec, was the ideal choice for this project. Despite his commercial and critical success, his films had limited exposure outside Quebec due to the language barrier. This project was an opportunity to bridge that gap and establish Maxime as an international A-list filmmaker.

Producing a high-budget film on Super 16mm during the SAG strike posed considerable financial challenges. We had to halt production mid-preparation, starting with a significant deficit due to the suspension and penalties. This deficit was resolved through contributions from all partners, with producers reinvesting their fees and corporate overhead into the film, although the situation remained fragile. The entire process, from development to financing to production and delivery, spanned seven years.

Filming in both Alberta and Quebec required transporting the technical team amidst rising inflation and increased interest rates for bank loans. The logistical complexity was further compounded by union and administrative rigidity, leading to increased costs. Additionally, national productions in Canada often receive less attention compared to foreign productions, presenting further obstacles.

Despite these challenges, several highlights stood out. The collaboration between an anglophone screenwriter, a Quebecois director, and a Quebec-led coproduction with Ontario, shot in Alberta and Montreal, showcased the diverse talent pool within Canada. Our first-time collaboration with Hollywood actors, including Maika Monroe and Troy Kotsur, added depth and broad appeal to the film. The film's acquisition for international distribution by Universal (confidential) was a major milestone, demonstrating its global potential. Key positions were held by highly skilled department heads with experience in large-scale projects in Quebec, whose expertise was crucial to the project's success. The coproducers aimed to create a film that resonated with a

broad audience beyond the festival circuit, elevating Canadian cinema on the international stage and exploring new ways of filmmaking. Despite the challenges, the desire to contribute to the international recognition of Canadian cinema and innovate in film production was a driving force behind the project. "In Cold Light" pushed boundaries and set new standards for future projects, blending artistic vision with broad accessibility.

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

What uniquely defines me as a Canadian producer is my unwavering commitment to enriching the film industry with diverse, innovative, and thought-provoking narratives. Over the past two decades, I have dedicated my career to challenging norms and bringing underrepresented stories to global audiences through my work at PERIPHERIA, the Montreal-based boutique production company I co-founded in 2000.

Born in Ottawa and raised in Gatineau, my journey in Canadian cinema has been driven by a passion for storytelling and a deep commitment to social consciousness and artistic integrity. This commitment is exemplified in my production of "Night of the Kings," a critically acclaimed film from Ivory Coast filmmaker Philippe Lacote, that premiered at Venice followed by selections at TIFF, NYFF, Sundance, and many more, that was shortlisted for Best International feature at the 2021 Oscars and nominated for Best Canadian Film at the 2022 Canadian Screen Awards. The film's success underscores my dedication to creating impactful and globally resonant films.

As a founding member of the Union des productrices et producteurs de films du Québec (UPPCQ) and an active participant in various film organization boards, I am committed to advancing the film industry both at home and abroad. As a Eurodoc alumnus and a member of ACE (Atelier du cinéma Européen) since 2015, I have continually expanded my industry knowledge and network, attending several markets and labs annually.

Collaboration is a cornerstone of my work. In projects like "In Cold Light," I have united talent from different regions and backgrounds, demonstrating the strength of Canada's diverse talent pool. This film showcases the collaborative spirit that defines modern, inclusive Canadian cinema.

Overcoming logistical and financial challenges is another defining aspect of my career. My experience with international co-productions prepared me for the challenge of producing "In Cold Light" under difficult circumstances, as previously highlighted.

My work continues to foster innovative and impactful narratives, as seen in upcoming projects like Jean-Claude Barney's "Fanon," a historical drama about decolonial thinker Frantz Fanon, in coproduction with France (lead) and Luxembourg, and Bruno Mourral's "Kidnapping Inc.," which premiered at Sundance 2024. Previous films such as

"Lemonade," lead produced by Christian Mungiu and co-produced with Germany and Sweden, and the feature documentary "Gulistan, Land of Roses" by Zayne Akyol, co-produced with Germany and the NFB, have also won several international awards and accolades. These films underscore my dedication to nurturing creative partnerships and pushing the boundaries of traditional storytelling.

In summary, what uniquely defines me as a Canadian producer is my passion for diverse and socially conscious storytelling, my ability to unite talent across regions, my resilience in overcoming production challenges, and my unwavering commitment to elevating Canadian cinema on the global stage. My career is a testament to these values, contributing to the rich tapestry of Canadian cinema and inspiring future generations of filmmakers.

What defines your body of work?

My body of work is defined by a commitment to diversity, cultural richness, and social consciousness. Over the years, I have cultivated a distinctive approach that combines collaboration, inclusivity, and a deep engagement with contemporary issues.

Diverse Team: My work is marked by collaboration with a diverse team and colleagues, such as Leslie Dabit and Pierre Villepelet, emerging producers and close day-to-day collaborators from underrepresented communities. They bring a wealth of perspectives and experiences to our productions, enriching the creative process and outcome.

Cultural Diversity: I prioritize working with artists from various cultural backgrounds, which is reflected in the variety and authenticity of the stories we create. This dedication to cultural diversity ensures that our narratives are not only inclusive but also resonate with a wide audience.

Tackling Social and Political Issues: My productions often address concrete social and political issues, offering deep reflections on contemporary realities and contributing to important discussions. This focus on relevant themes helps to create impactful and thought-provoking films.

Territorial Anchoring: Many of my works are rooted in specific territorial contexts, lending them authenticity and relevance by echoing local stories and cultural landscapes. This grounding in place ensures that the narratives are both genuine and resonant.

Women's Representation: The representation of women is central to my work, both in front of and behind the camera. I am committed to promoting female voices and exploring stories that highlight their experiences and contributions, ensuring gender diversity in all aspects of production.

Examples of Films: - "Daudistan" by Afghan-US-Canadian filmmaker Ariel Nasser (packaging/financing) - "Fanon" by Martiniquais-French filmmaker Jean Claude Barny (to

be released), a France/Luxembourg-Canada coproduction. - "Kidnapping Inc." by Haitian filmmaker Bruno Mourral, a France-Canada-Haiti coproduction. - "Night of the Kings" by Ivory Coast-French filmmaker Philippe Lacote (2020), a France, Canada, Ivory Coast, Senegal coproduction. - "Lemonade" by Romanian filmmaker Ioana Uricaru (2018), a Romania-Canada-Germany-Sweden coproduction. - "Gulistan, Land of Roses" by Kurdish-canadian filmmaker Zayne Akyol (2017), a Canada-Germany (Kurdistan)-NFB coproduction. - "X500" (X Quinientos) (2016) by Colombia-Canadian filmmaker Juan Andres Arango, a Canada-Colombia-Mexico coproduction.

In summary, my body of work is characterized by its diversity, cultural authenticity, and engagement with social and political issues. Through collaboration, territorial anchoring, and a commitment to gender diversity, I strive to create films that are not only artistically excellent but also socially impactful.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

What defines me as a leader in Canadian independent production is my holistic approach to fostering a vibrant and inclusive film industry. My leadership is characterized by a profound commitment to local narratives, active industry involvement, and a strong dedication to supporting diverse emerging talent.

Local Narratives: I am deeply committed to capturing unique stories and landscapes, whether in Canada or abroad. My productions highlight local and regional realities, providing an authentic reflection of diverse cultural heritage. This focus on territorial engagement ensures that the films I produce resonate deeply with audiences by grounding them in genuine and relatable contexts.

Industry Advocacy: As an active member of key industry associations, including the Union des Productrices et Producteurs de Cinéma du Québec (UPPCQ), which I co-founded, and previously with DOC (Quebec chapter), I play a significant role in shaping the future of independent cinema in Canada. My participation in these organizations helps advocate for better policies, resources, and opportunities for independent filmmakers, strengthening the industry's overall infrastructure.

Championing Emerging Talent: Supporting emerging artists is a cornerstone of my leadership. I am dedicated to providing platforms and resources for new talent through mentorship programs, workshops, and collaborative projects. This commitment nurtures the next generation of Canadian filmmakers and brings fresh perspectives and innovation to the industry. Emerging filmmakers we are currently working with include Eli Jean Tahchi (writer-director), Beatrice Moukhaiber (emerging producer), Marie-Josée Saint-Pierre (writer-director), Gio Olmos (writer-director), Elle Barbara (writer-director) and Ariel Nasr (writer-director), Leslie Dabit & Pierre Villepelet (producers).

Innovative Collaborations: My work is defined by innovative collaborations that bridge established and emerging talent. Projects like Philippe Lacote's "Night of the Kings," Ioana Uricaru's "Lemonade," and Juan Andres Arango's "X500" showcase my ability to unite diverse voices from different cultural backgrounds, and foster a collaborative environment that promotes creativity and excellence. These projects reflect my dedication to pushing the boundaries of traditional storytelling and creating impactful narratives.

In summary, my leadership in Canadian independent production is defined by a commitment to local narratives, active industry advocacy, and unwavering support for emerging talent. Through these efforts, I strive to create a dynamic and inclusive film industry that celebrates the diverse stories and voices of Canada.

Ziad Touma

Production company(ies)

Couzin Films Inc.

Short biography of producer (or producer team)

Ziad Touma is an award-winning producer, director and writer, working in film, television and interactive media, in fiction and non-fiction (lifestyle, reality and documentary series), in both English and French. With 25 years of experience in content development and over a hundred hours of produced works, his series have been broadcast on many Canadian TV channels including: Radio-Canada, TVA, MusiquePlus/MuchMusic, TéléQuébec, TV5, Super Écran, TFO, CTV, Showcase, The Movie Network, MovieCentral, IFC, Slice, Biography and CityTV. Ziad produced eight feature films, the most recent of which include *The Thawing of Ice (La fonte des glaces)* with Christine Beaulieu and Lothaire Bluteau released in 2024, *Evergreens (Sapins)* with Étienne Galloy and Diane Rouxel released in 2023 as well as two films released in 2019: *Ghost Town Anthology (Répertoire des villes disparues)*, a film by Denis Côté (Official Competition Berlinale, San Sebastian, Karlovy Vary, and more) and the feature documentary *City Dreamers (Rêveuses de villes)* by Joseph Hillel (RIDM, FIFA, DOXA, ADFF, AFFR) about four pioneer women architects. In 2016, Ziad produced *The Sound of Trees (Le bruit des arbres)* by François Péloquin, featuring Roy Dupuis, that premiered in Official Competition at Karlovy Vary Film Festival and won Best emerging Director at Vancouver's IFF. Ziad's most recent interactive VR fiction series *The Passengers*, coproduced with France, was developed at the Sundance New Frontier Story Lab, premiered in Competition at Tribeca, SXSW, Cannes XR, NewImages Paris, FNC Montreal, Rotterdam IFFR, Geneva GIFF, Vancouver VIFF, Taipei IFF, nominated as Best Experience at the World VR Awards and won Best interactive Fiction at the Canadian Screen Awards. A graduate of Concordia University in Communication Studies, his student film, *Dinner at Bubby's*, a family comedy, won Best Canadian Student Film at the Montreal International Short film Festival. Ziad then studied in Management of cultural industries at HEC-Montréal, as well as the Mediterranean Film Business School in Spain.

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

La fonte des glaces 2024

Sapins 2023

Répertoire des villes disparues 2019

Rêveuses de villes 2019

Le bruit des arbres 2015

L'ange gardien 2014

Adam's Wall 2008

Saved by the belles 2003

Name of qualifying feature film

The Thawing of Ice (La fonte des glaces)

Expected release date in 2024:

March 22, 2024

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

Theatrical

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

Maison 4:3

Film synopsis

Louise Denoncourt, a parole officer unlike any other, deftly operates an experimental rehabilitation wing for murderers. A new inmate in her care is suspected of killing her mother. Riddled with doubt, Louise embarks on a mission that quickly goes beyond her. How far will she go to prevent him from killing again?

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

Sarah Lévesque and François Péloquin who I also collaborated with on *Le bruit des arbres* came to me in 2011 with the idea of making a film about forgiveness and second chances in life. A film that explores how our society and legal system deals with mistakes. They wanted to question the carceral system and how we punish prisoners instead of trying to rehabilitate them. From the synopsis to final draft, we developed together the story of a parole officer who operates an experimental aisle in a maximum security jail to rehabilitate prisoners. Her life's mission is challenged when she is confronted with a new detainee who is suspected of having killed her mother. We wanted to explore how far will she go to try to prevent him from killing again. After tackling the desertation of the rural regions of Quebec in our first film, we wanted to address another important subject together, which is about how efficient our prison system is and if people can inherently change. It was important for us to make an entertaining and audience pleasing film with a deeper subject matter at its heart. We

had truly inspiring exchanges with the audience every time we accompanied the film in cinemas.

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

This film took 13 years to make from synopsis to screen and saw many iterations before financing was finally completed. Many times during the process, we felt like we wanted to abandon the project, but we continued on because we knew that we were telling a compelling and relevant story. Making a feature film is a long creative and funding process that challenges our dedication and resilience to the art form. We did multiple development and production applications until we were able to raise half the budget from SODEC only, as Telefilm didn't embark in production. Our passion for telling this story motivated us to greenlight the film even without a completed budget. We were able to do so as our collaborators believed in this project as much as we did. For example, famous and talented actors Christine Beaulieu and Lothaire Bluteau, our first casting choices, signed on at the minimum union rates because they wanted to share the message of the film and were inspired by the depth and complexity of their characters. They brought truth and compassion to the roles and helped attach a professional production crew. The physical production needs of this project were, however, quite challenging. For example, our film is set during winter and spring. We were hoping to film continuously in 2023 to have enough time to prepare and complete our financial structure. But since SODEC gave us their funding answer in December 2021, they wanted us to spend their investment within the year, which forced us to jumpstart production in March 2022 and film the whole Spring ending in only 5 days. These first days, filled with car stunts, boat chases complex emotional scenes and physical stunts were very challenging to execute with a limited prep time, small team and a shoestring budget. We still managed to get great footage in, but it taught us essential lessons for the next winter block, where we invested in better prep and rehearsals, a dedicated crew and more time staging. After rushing that Spring block of shooting to fit the funding needs, it gave me a few months to try to raise more money, including negotiating with our distributor to invest more MG, broadcaster presales a limited Telefilm funding in postproduction that all helped us complete the film properly. I'm happy to see a diverse cast without it being the subject of the film, from a Black prison director, to an ensemble cast inclusive of indigenous, Asian and Arab emerging actors.

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

I feel privileged to work in the Canadian production industry and have the liberty to pick the subjects that I deem important to tell to inform and advance our society's point of view. I have chosen topics ranging from the LGBTQ+ community that I belong to (like

my first feature *Saved by the Belles*), to racially charged stories with diverse religions (like *Adam's Wall*), always from very specific auteur point of views (like Denis Côté's *Répertoire des villes disparues* that competed in Berlinale) to more commercial topics (like Stéphane Moukarzel's indie Christmas comedy *Sapins*). I have worked in coproduction to enhance a project's global perspective and collaborated with distributors and international sales agents to bring our stories to global markets.

What defines your body of work?

From the very beginning of defining my company Couzin Films' mission 25 years ago in 1999, I wanted it to have four main values that we still live by when choosing our projects: representing on screen cultural diversity in all its different forms, choosing socially relevant topics that can hopefully raise the dialogue and inspire social change, encourage artistic and/or technological innovation and target the specific audiences for every story. People recognize in my filmography the importance of team work and cohesive production value, strong character driven films with powerful performances, socially provocative stories and well crafted and original cinematography and art direction. The films I produced all stemmed from very personal auteur point of views that I helped make into universal stories. I also value my experience producing in different media, from feature film, television series to interactive web and VR experiences, I feel I learn from every format's artists, artisans and processes about leading creativity, managing risks and addressing audiences. I also like « pollinating » each medium with the best practices from another, enhancing filmmaking's proven models by new media's agile management, and vice versa, hence improving our team work on every project.

What defines you as a leader in Canadian independent production?

I have a deep respect for the profession of producing, and we are privileged to have fostered great producers in Canada through our education system, professional development opportunities and public and private funding system. I see myself as a facilitator between filmmakers and their audience. It is challenging to navigate all the rules and gatekeepers, and I recently understood why it was even more difficult for indigenous, Black and people of color to enter this once safely guarded production system. Because I've been representing cultural diversity since the opening of Couzin Films, I faced many obstacles of multiple projects rejected by juries that couldn't relate to stories and characters from different cultural backgrounds.

Only with the social changes of 2020, when funders started asking me for advice on how to make our industry more inclusive (since I was one of the first production companies in Quebec held by a person of color) did I feel that we were finally having an open dialogue about diversity and inclusion. I started to better understand how our

production system has been so gate guarded and privileged only a handful of producers. I co-founded Coalition M.É.D.I.A. (Média pour l'Équité, Diversité, Inclusion et Accessibilité) to make the producing profession more accessible to Indigenous, Black people and racialized people like myself. I am now more hopeful for the next generation when I see the results of our mobilization and all the changes occurring in the industry to make it more accessible and I feel privileged to be at the forefront of that dialogue.