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VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WOMEN IN FILM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES RESILIENCE IN A TIME OF CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

VANCOUVER, BC — The 16th annual Vancouver International Women in Film Festival (VIWFF), online March 4 -14, 2021, is pleased to screen 32 films from 16 countries, including 14 Canadian films—with 10 from local BC filmmakers, and 8 Vancouver digital premieres. Produced by Women in Film and Television Vancouver (WIFTV) and themed “Resilience. Challenge. Change.”, this year’s virtual VIWFF showcases an international lineup of short- and feature-length films, from narrative and documentary to experimental and animation.

“I’m excited to share this year’s film program, which celebrates the complexity and diversity of ways girls and women choose to challenge, overcome, and inspire—themselves, each other,

their communities, and our world today,” says Marena Dix, Festival Programming Committee Chair.

VIWFF 2021 is proud to showcase a majority of women filmmakers and creatives, including the stories and voices of Canadian and international Black, Indigenous and Women of Colour, non-binary, and trans women, in an official selection of 6 feature films and 26 shorts. Each film program includes a Virtual Artist Talk with the filmmakers.

The features slate includes three Canadian films, with two from BC: *Brother, I Cry* from Indigenous director Jessie Anthony and award-winning *The Curse of Willow Song* from established horror genre director Karen Lam, as well as *Passages* from Quebec-based director Florence Pelletier; and two Vancouver premieres of international films—*Holy Rights* (India) from director Farha Khatun, and the Kyrgyzstan-filmed, award-winning drama *Ala Kachuu—Take And Run* (Switzerland) from director Maria Brendle.

The shorts programs include films from 8 local BC filmmakers including Camille Hollett-French, who won the WIFTV Award for Best Direction by a Woman at the recent Vancouver Short Film Festival for *FREYA*, which also garnered the VSFF Audience Choice Award; Josephine Anderson, *On Falling*; Andy Hodgson, *El Color Negro*; Tara-Lee Novak, *Sombrio Surf*; Inder Nirwan, *Hum and Do No Harm*; Maud Pugliese, *La Danza delle Streghe*; Sepideh Yadegar, *From...*; and Hannah Smith, *The Art of Dieting* (Vancouver premiere). Six shorts will have their Vancouver premiere at VIWFF 2021, including *The Bath* (Tunisia/France); *The Death of Winter* (Canada); *Doll* (Iran); *Ivo* (Norway); and *Synthetic Love* (France).

VIWFF 2021 is also proud to present a slate of select live streamed events, including an International Women’s Day panel (March 8) with government and industry organizations, this year with representatives from the Black Screen Office, Canada Media Fund, CBC, Creative BC, Hire BIPOC, the National Film Board, Telefilm Canada, and Women in View; a genre panel (March 9) featuring keynote Diana Williams of Kinetic Energy Entertainment, and finalists from the WIFTV From Our Dark Side feature film project development incubator; an Artist Talk (March 10) with the ten VIWFF Screenplay Competition Finalists; actor table reads (March 12+13) of script excerpts from the WIFTV Tricksters and Writers Indigenous feature script writing program; a Digital Marketing for Media workshop (March 13) with Annelise Larson; and the Best of the Fest awards announcements, hosted by *YVR Screen Scene* podcast host, Sabrina Furminger.

VIWFF is produced annually by Women In Film and Television Vancouver (WIFTV). Now in its 16th year, VIWFF continues to provide a platform for challenging gender imbalance and the lack of equity and diversity in the screen-based media industry.

All film programs are on demand on festival partner platform, VIFF Connect, through the festival dates March 4-14, 2021 inclusive. **Film program tickets/festival passes will go on sale via VIFF Connect as of February 25, 2021.** Additional programming, including virtual panels and awards announcements, will require separate registration via Zoom through the VIWFF website,

and are free this year in recognition of the economic hardships faced by many in our communities.

On-demand film program and virtual event information can be found at: <https://viwff.ca/>

VIWFF 2021 is grateful for the support of sponsors and partners including: Canada Media Fund, Canadian Heritage, BC Arts Council, Creative BC, City of Vancouver Cultural Services, Telefilm Canada, Indigenous Digital Filmmaking Program Capilano University – BOSA Centre for Film and Animation, Front Row Insurance, VIFF Connect, William F. White, Stripe Graphics, Karen Leung Marketing + Design, ChiehXChieh, EMG Design, Pender PR, Loose Lips Media, Tech Butlers

Community partners: Vancouver Asian Film Festival, Vancouver Short Film Festival, Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival, DOXA Documentary Film Festival, Powell River Film Festival, Pacific Screenwriting Program, Cold Reading Series, Women in the Director's Chair

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Women In Film and Television Vancouver (WIFTV) incorporated in 1989 as a not-for-profit society registered in British Columbia. We are a member driven organization committed to addressing the systemic barriers to women's equal participation in the production and dissemination of screen-based media, and to the creation of a more inclusive media for both creators and audiences. We approach our goals by working with a range of partners to increase funding, employment, and promotional opportunities for women. We present and publicly celebrate the achievement of women in screen-based media, and offer professional and project development opportunities. We define women as those individuals who identify themselves within the spectrum of the gender identity of woman including trans women and cisgender women. We are located on the unceded traditional and ancestral homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

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