

20TH
CALGARY
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER
18-29, 2019

presented by
ATB



2019
FESTIVAL
REPORT

VHS

200 MOVIES, 12 DAYS, ENDLESS FUN

WHO WE ARE

The 20th Anniversary Calgary International Film Festival took place September 18-29, 2019 in the heart of downtown. Over twelve days, the festival showcased around 200 of the year's most ground-breaking and must-see films from around the world - each handpicked by our expert programming team for Calgarians to enjoy. Going beyond just watching a film, the festival gave movie-goers and filmmakers a unique chance to connect with one another over their love of film and enjoy remarkable experiences together!

VISION

Our world perspective reflected, enriched and broadened by shared cinematic experiences.

MISSION

To entertain and engage audiences by curating the most innovative and compelling films, and creating remarkable festival experiences.

VALUES

Story; Discovery; Diversity; Respect; Sustainability; Collaboration

CIFF is a fantastic experience for any filmmaker! Everything about the festival exudes a passion for giving artists the best possible platform to share his or her creation with the world!

- John Walker, Director of ASSHOLES: A THEORY



A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STEVE SCHROEDER



What a joy it was to celebrate the 20th anniversary Calgary International Film Festival with all 35,368 you this past September! Thank you for sharing your love of cinema and community with us.

More than a quarter of you were first-time attendees, which is especially wonderful.

On behalf of CIFF's board of directors and staff, I would like to thank the hundreds upon hundreds of sponsors, donors and volunteers who helped make this year's festival a reality. And let's take a moment to reflect, on this anniversary year, that CIFF has indeed been a labour

of love for literally thousands of people who, over two decades, have donated their time, talent, sweat and resources to create and sustain the festival for the enjoyment and benefit of our city.

Of the countless facts and statistics that we're proud to share with you in this final report, I want to highlight two of my favourites. Of the record number of people who completed this year's post-festival audience survey, 99% said the festival was fun, and 95% said it offered something unique and different. These results speak to success in achieving CIFF's mission, which is to entertain and engage audiences by curating the most innovative and compelling films, and creating remarkable festival experiences.

We hope you enjoyed this year's festival and look forward to seeing you at next year's CIFF, September 23 - October 4, 2020, and in the meantime at the increasing number of year-round screenings and events that we are bringing to you.

Steve Schroeder, *Executive Director*

CIFF was one of the best film festivals I've attended in recent memory. Fantastic programming, generous support for their filmmakers and one of the best audiences I've had the pleasure of sharing my movie with. I will not be missing an opportunity to attend again!

- Brett Harvey, Director of INMATE #1: THE RISE OF DANNY TREJO

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Something Orange, *Videography*

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CIFF EXPERIENCE YEAR-ROUND

While the festival is our flagship offering, CIFF operates year-round to promote film and film culture. 2019 saw the introduction of two new film series to Calgary – MoS Docs and Global Perspectives.



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

A brand new contemporary world cinema series that navigates all corners of the globe, bringing compelling stories and experiences for Calgarians to enjoy. This collection of exciting worldly films will make their Calgary debuts at Globe Cinema on the second Wednesday of each month.



MOS DOCS

Building on CIFF's popular Music on Screen (MoS) series during the festival, MoS Docs, running January to June, is a new documentary series dedicated to showcasing the year's most talked about and compelling music documentaries from around the world - from the grassroots of rock 'n' roll to hip-hop and folk and everything in between.



DOC SOUP

Doc Soup Calgary is a monthly feature-length documentary series presented in partnership with the Calgary International Film Festival and Hot Docs. The series, now in its 12th year, screens on the first Wednesday of each month from November through April and brings six of the year's most talked-about docs to local audiences.

OSCAR® SHORTS

The Oscar® Shorts screenings give Calgarians a chance to join audiences around the world in enjoying this year's section of shorts and predict their winners. Oscar Shorts weekend will take place January 31, February 1 & February 2, 2020, one week ahead of 92nd Academy Awards.



A RED CARPET AFFAIR:

CELEBRATING HOLLYWOOD'S BEST On February 9, 2020 CIFF will throw Calgary's only official Oscar® Party and fundraiser. Hundreds of fans from across the city will gather at our 5th annual event to cheer on their favourite films, network with the Alberta industry, walk the red carpet and watch a live broadcast of the Academy Awards.

35,368 people attended this year's 20th Anniversary celebrations. Our special Retrospective series saw us partner up with the Calgary Central Library to bring the public five free screenings of some of the best Made in Alberta films of the last 20 years. We also saw the second year of the Generation Next youth program expand to 1,683 participating students from 82 classes in and around Calgary.

FAN OF THE YEAR

In a record-breaking feat, Bryce Hollingsworth won CIFF's 2019 Fan of the Year Award by seeing 50 films over 11 days of the festival – 13 more than our 2018 winner! Bryce accepted the award at the encore screening of GUEST OF HONOUR on September 29th and reported his best films of the festival were VIVARIUM and BELONGING, but for very different reasons, with an honourable mention to GREENER GRASS. Bryce walked away with a \$1,000 USD travel voucher from Delta Airlines and bragging rights!



Bryce Hollingsworth, 2019 Fan of the Year

OUR AUDIENCE

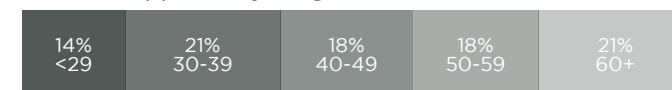
AUDIENCE SURVEY RESULTS

Festival partner Stone-Olafson surveyed our audience to once again capture their feedback so we can continue our mission of creating remarkable festival experiences for Calgarians.

AUDIENCE PROFILE



our films appeal to young and old alike



guests are seeing more and more films, averaging **4.6 films** (4.4 in 2018), while 240 guests saw over 10 films.



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

95% said the festival met or exceeded expectations (on par with 2018)

87% rated their festival experience an 8 out of 10 or higher (86% in 2018)

87% are likely to attend the festival next year (86% in 2018)

99% agree they had fun at the festival; 96% agree the festival was well-organized and operated; and 95% agree the festival is something unique and different



FILMS & GALAS



A MESSAGE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, BRIAN OWENS

The 20th Calgary International Film Festival marked several milestones. Along with celebrating the 20th Anniversary, the festival saw a record number of films submitted for consideration (2,820) and presented the most diverse selection in history with 51 nations represented in the final selection. CIFF made further strides to gender equity with 46% of feature films either directed or co-directed by women.

From micro-budget Alberta cinema (WHAT WE DON'T SAY) to star-studded, Oscar-calibre hits (JUDY, DOLEMITE IS MY NAME), the festival also showcased all that cinema could be. The Galas featured placed a spotlight on Canadian films with THE SONG OF NAMES opening the festival, GUEST OF HONOUR closing the festival and the brand new Centrepiece Gala – ONCE WERE BROTHERS: ROBBIE ROBERTSON AND THE BAND selling out in the middle of the fest.

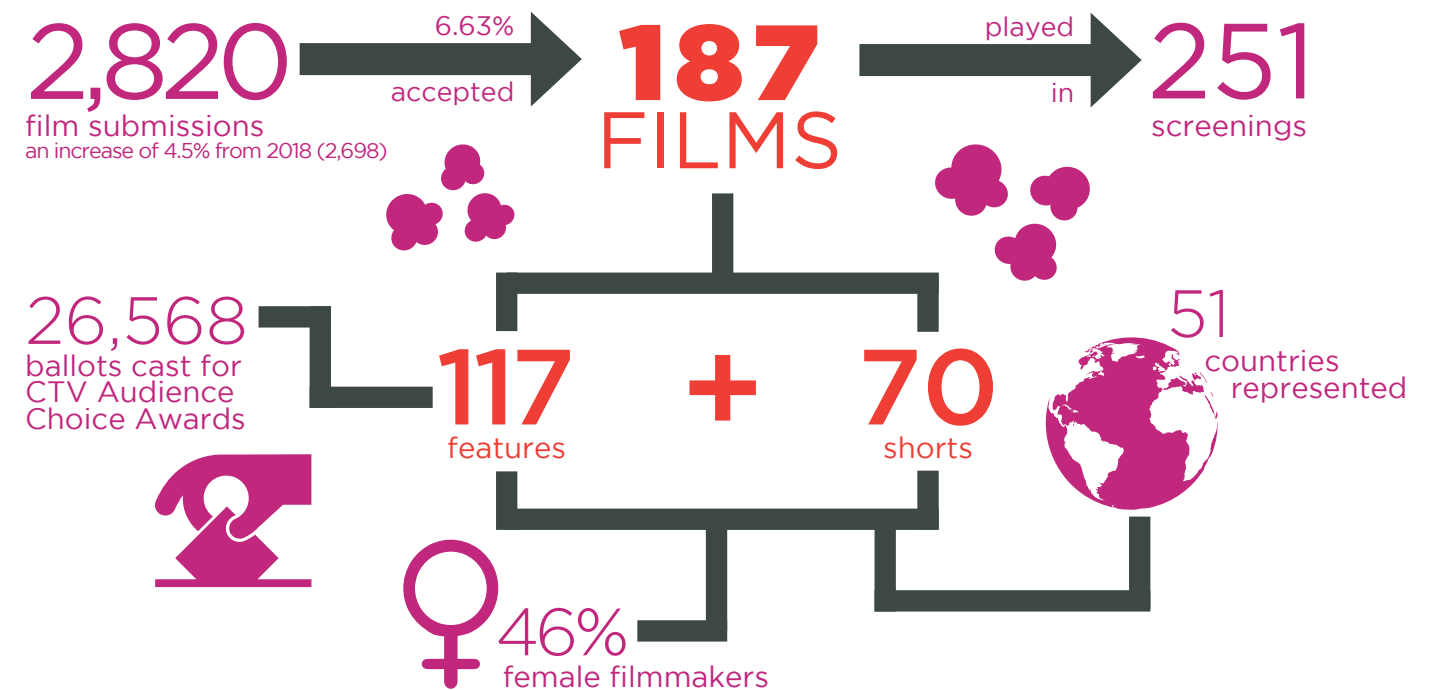
Behind the Screen (BTS) saw a great rise in attendance thanks in part to two highly successful events – IN CONVERSATION WITH JASON REITMAN and the FILM CAREER EXPO in partnership with Keep Alberta Rolling and the Central Public Library. Attendance to our youth-oriented Generation Next film series grew by 27% in its second year. I look forward to seeing you at next year's festival and our many screenings and events between now and then.

Brian Owens, *Artistic Director*



OPENING GALA

To open the 20th Calgary International Film Festival on September 18th, we once again packed the Jack Singer Concert Hall for our Opening Gala evening with the film THE SONG OF NAMES, featuring live music, a red carpet and a post-film Q&A by the films' director François Girard. Prior to the event, 250 guests joined us at the Glenbow Museum for a hugely successful pre-reception.



Mayor Naheed Nenshi



Megan Konschuh of Duo Grande

CENTREPIECE GALA

Midway through the festival we hosted our first ever Centrepiece Gala at Studio Bell, home of the National Music Centre, which kicked off our Music on Screen Series with a film hot off the festival circuit, ONCE WERE BROTHERS: ROBBIE ROBERTSON AND THE BAND. Guests had the opportunity to wander around some of the exhibits before settling in for a screening of the film, introduced by video message from Director Daniel Roher. The film went on to receive a standing ovation.

CLOSING GALA

This year we chose two films for our Closing Gala, one for each screen at the Globe, followed by our celebratory Block Party on the closed-to-traffic 8th Avenue and participating venues along the street. Atom Egoyan, director of Closing Gala pick GUEST OF HONOUR along with actress Arsinée Khanjian graced our red carpet and gave a captivating Q&A session. Our second Closing Gala film, DOLEMITE IS MY NAME starring Eddie Murphy and an all-star cast, provided a perfect opportunity for costumes.



BEST OF THE FESTIVAL

AWARDS PARTY

The 3rd annual Awards Party took place at a packed Paper St following the ALBERTA SPIRIT: ALBERTA MADE SHORTS screening across the road at Globe Cinema. Fans and filmmakers mingled as they heard who was crowned the CIFF 2019 Jury Award Winners.

JURIED AWARDS

All of this year's juried award winners received a cash prize, and the Best Overall Short winner is eligible for Academy Award qualification.

BEST OF SHORTS (\$2,500 PRIZE EACH)
presented by MiniMax and Jerilyn Wright

Best Alberta Short: Levi Holwell for A WALK DOWN TO WATER
(+ \$5,000 gift certificate for services and equipment from William F. White International)

Best Documentary Short: Asia Youngman for THIS INK RUNS DEEP
Honourable Mention: Patrick Fileti for INFERNO

Best Live Action or Animated Short: Trevor Anderson for DOCKING
As CIFF is an Oscar-Qualifying Festival, by winning this award DOCKING is now eligible to be submitted for consideration for the Academy Awards

DGC CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY AWARD
(\$5,000 + \$1,000 VISTEK GIFTCARD)
Phyllis Ellis for TOXIC BEAUTY
Honourable Mention: Shannon Walsh for ILLUSIONS OF CONTROL

RBC EMERGING ARTIST AWARD (\$10,000)
Heather Young for MURMUR
Honourable Mention: Matthew Rankin for THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

SPECIAL JURY MENTION FOR ACTING
Hong Chau and Sarah Gadon for AMERICAN WOMAN

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
Tasha Hubbard for nîpawistamâsowin: WE WILL STAND UP

"We are so honoured and humbled by receiving the Audience Choice Award for our section at CIFF! Our time in Calgary was an incredible experience, and being able to sit amongst such a spirited, engaged and thoughtful audience is one of the major reasons why we do this. So, thank you to the festival for having us, and thank you to the audience who gave us the privilege of sharing our work."

– Richard Wong, Director & Grant Rosenmeyer, Producer of COME AS YOU ARE

FAN FAVOURITE AWARD

presented by Evans Hunt & Stone-Olafson

Anyone who saw 10 or more films was eligible to vote:

PARASITE, directed by Bong Joon Ho



Adam Scorgie, Producer & Brett Harvey, Director, INMATE #1: THE RISE OF DANNY TREJO

Katherine & Nick North, Directors, JUST ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL FAMILY

"The Calgary Film Festival was awesome; the people were amazing. The red-carpet event that they put on for the world premiere of our film was something that none of us are ever going to forget. And now to have this awesome acknowledgement on top of that from the fans and the people who came to view the film that's just icing on the cake."

– Brett Harvey, Director of INMATE #1: THE RISE OF DANNY TREJO



AUDIENCE AWARDS

presented by CTV

The best films of the festival as chosen by our audience! Most films at the festival were eligible for our Audience Choice Awards and are based on the collective score of the audience ballots cast electronically at each screening. Four extra award categories were added to this year's Awards.

ALBERTA FEATURE
ROOT OF THE PROBLEM, directed by Scott Sikma

CANADIAN NARRATIVE FEATURE
JEUNE JULIETTE, directed by Anne Émond

CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY
INMATE #1: THE RISE OF DANNY TREJO, directed by Brett Harvey

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY
FOR SAMA, directed by Waad al-Kateab and Edward Watts

MUSIC ON SCREEN
LINDA RONSTADT: THE SOUND OF MY VOICE, directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman

NEW AMERICAN CINEMA
COME AS YOU ARE, directed by Richard Wong

HEADLINER
THE SPECIALS, directed by Olivier Nakache and Éric Toledano

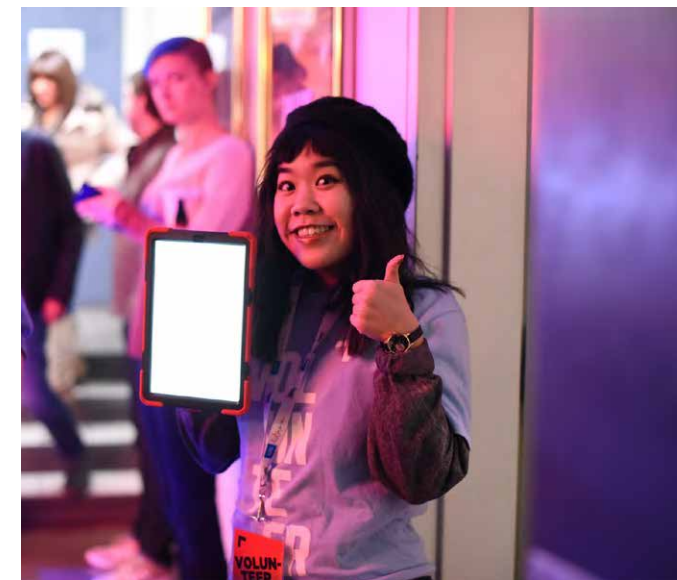
WORLD CINEMA
TOP END WEDDING, directed by Wayne Blair

LATE SHOWS
Z, directed by Brandon Christensen

ALBERTA SHORTS
JUST ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL FAMILY, directed by Katherine North and Nick North

NARRATIVE SHORT (LIVE ACTION OR ANIMATED)
MÉMORABLE, directed by Bruno Collet

DOCUMENTARY SHORT
ZONE ROUGE, directed by Dominique Van Olm



"We're incredibly excited to take home the audience award for the Late Show at CIFF. We make these kinds of films to be watched in a setting like CIFF. Packing a large theatre and getting everyone scared is rewarding in itself, so to be given their approval takes it to the next level. I hope we have another opportunity to play CIFF in the future, it was a blast!"

– Brandon Christensen, Director of Z



Director, Producer and cast of Z

FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

CIFF is more than just a movie-going experience. It's a communal discovery of art, storytelling, visuals, and viewpoints; a chance to laugh together, cry together and journey through the lens together. It's broadening your perspective and your tastes, and experiencing the largest variety of film genres and topics you may never have had the chance to before. It's a chance to be the first to see future cult-classics & Oscar ready films, enjoy awesome cinematic experiences, champion local and Alberta filmmakers while connecting filmmakers & fans.

TRAILER PARTY

Over 600 people packed Globe Cinema for our fifth and biggest ever trailer viewing party. A free event that brings all the festival's trailers onto the big screen and helps festival goers choose which films they'd like to see at CIFF – which included more than a few big laughs, cheers and gasps from the audience.



INDUSTRY GUESTS & FILMMAKERS

This year CIFF welcomed 171 industry guests to the festival with 79% of guests attending from within Canada. The festival hosted 13 Industry networking events including ten Happy Hour events and three brunches. We rolled out the red carpet for eleven films including the World Premiere of local film INMATE #1: THE RISE OF DANNY TREJO. Our Opening Gala red carpet saw renowned Director François Girard delight fans, while our 20th Anniversary Retrospective Series screening of WAYDOWNTOWN, the first film to ever play at the festival, saw Director Gary Burns, Actor Don McKellar, Producer George Baptiste, writer Donna Brunsdale and Cinematographer Patrick McLaughlin all in attendance. While the Closing Gala had Atom Egoyan, we rounded off the festival on Sunday with a surprise visit from many of the cast and crew of GHOSTBUSTERS 2020. Actress McKenna Grace invited her fellow actors to the screening of her new film TROOP ZERO and finished off the festival with a Q&A.



McKenna Grace, actor, *TROOP ZERO*



François Girard, Director, *THE SONG OF NAMES*



Directors Jason Reitman & Ivan Reitman at *IN CONVERSATION WITH JASON REITMAN*

BEHIND THE SCREEN

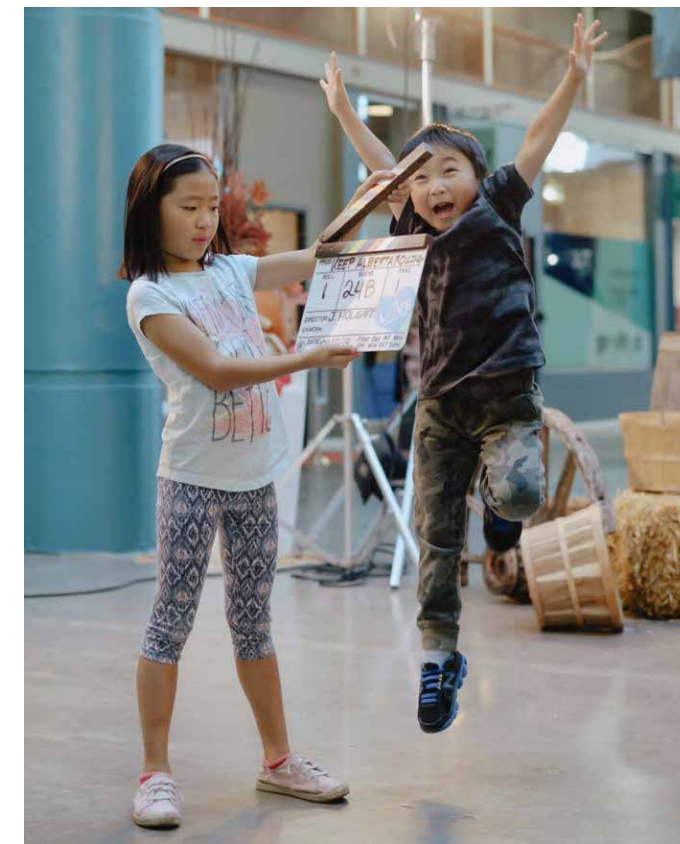
Our Behind the Screen (BTS) series connects local fans with the people who make the movies they love – taking audiences further into the world behind the scenes, and exploring all the different roles that go into bringing these stories to the big screen. This year saw the return of the hugely successful Bleeding Art Industries SPFX Shop Tour, a new Film Trivia Pub Quiz, three industry panels plus our Film Expo at Central Library. Undoubtedly though, the highlight of BTS was *IN CONVERSATION WITH JASON REITMAN* which not only saw Ghostbusters fans come dressed in costume but also Jason surprising audiences by inviting his father, legendary director Ivan Reitman, to join him in giving the talk – hosted by CTV's Tara Nelson.



Bleeding Art Industries SPFX Shop Tour

KEEP ALBERTA ROLLING

The opening and closing weekends of the festival saw *Keep Alberta Rolling* bring down an interactive film set giving people the chance to experience what it's like to be in front of and behind the camera! Over 1,100 people took part in the experience which returned to the Central Library for the festival's Film Expo.



GENERATION NEXT

Now in its second year, our youth-focused film series that empowers youth ambassadors to hand-pick films relevant to their generation continued to be a stand out success in 2019. 1,683 students attended the series (up 27% from 2018's inaugural year), watching six films chosen by our ten student previewers.

AIRPORT ACTIVATION

We expanded on our partnership with YYC Airport this year to give travellers a taste of what's to come at the festival. The YYC Theatre was created in the departures concourse of the terminal where people were able to immerse themselves in film, seeing all the trailers from the festival and planning their CIFF experience ahead of catching a flight!

PROMOTION & MARKETING

In celebration of 20 years our campaign took a retro feel with the artwork with vibrant eye-catching creative.

BRAND

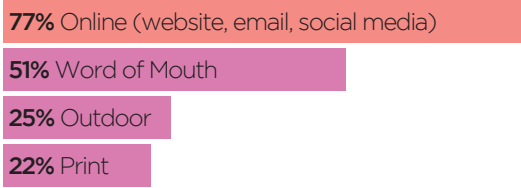
We continued with our “What a Scene” brand tagline, solidifying our identity and maintaining engagement from last year. It was familiar to our loyal film fans and relatable for first-time festival guests.



CAMPAIGN

We adopted a back-to-basics approach with the focus of reaching a new audience and increasing visibility of the festival through increased outdoor presence – billboards, posters, flyovers, flyers. Grassroots marketing initiatives drew on a balance of traditional and digital media tactics alongside earned media and community outreach. Messaging, including radio & TV, was streamlined to allow for fans to better digest the festival’s offerings and removing barriers to entry.

Once again online advertising and content plays a key role in audience recall with word of mouth growing in importance:



WEBSITE REDESIGN

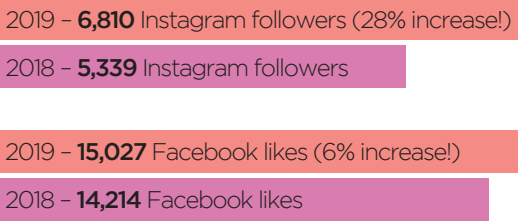
As such an integral tool in audiences planning process, we worked with festival partners Evans Hunt to fully redesign the calgaryfilm.com website to make it more user friendly and less intimidating for first timers & attendees. With guests averaging 4.6 films at the festival, the website was re-designed with a new ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’ filtering feature that allowed guests to narrow down films based on their preferences. Further integration with our ticketing provider Eventive made ticket purchasing easier.

ONLINE MARKETING

Digital advertising generated 3.3 million impressions and 2,850 conversions. Over the twelve days of the festival our ROI from online spend was 174%. Social media remains the biggest converter of sales with posts receiving 14k interactions – once again re-emphasising the power of engaging content.

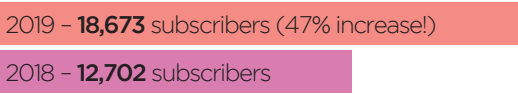
SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media continues to be a big driver of festival awareness and a means through which fans can access trailers and read blogs about our most anticipated titles. Facebook is our most engaged-with platform, with Instagram Stories gaining ground as film fans share their on-the-ground excitement straight from the cinema. Twitter helps our fans get live updates on which films are selling out and is a great way to get closer to filmmakers live from their Q&As.



NEWSLETTER

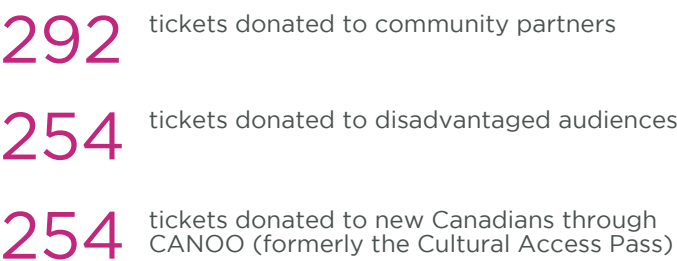
By far the biggest converter and driver of sales, newsletters were sent tactically to targeted audiences between the festival and Eventive databases to push specific films & events based on the audience. Newsletter recipients increased to 18,673 – a 47% increase on 2018.



IN THE COMMUNITY

MAKING FILM ACCESSIBLE

As part of our endeavours to be a positive force in our community, each year we make a point of working with, donating tickets to, groups who may otherwise not be aware of the festival, or be able to attend.



SUPPORTING CIFF

PARTNERS

We are grateful once again to our loyal presenting partner ATB and 59 returning partners for their continued support. This year we saw 42 new partners support CIFF for our 20th Anniversary year. It is the dedication from over 200 organizations, businesses, public funders, charitable foundations, media and community partners that make the festival possible. We extend our deepest thanks to all our partners – as listed on the next page.



“ATB’s partnership with the Calgary International Film Festival... gives us the opportunity to showcase the great work that is being done in the Alberta film industry and promote our own creative and entrepreneurial spirit internationally. We are incredibly proud to play a role at this festival and help bring outstanding new work to screens in Calgary.”

– Curtis Stange, President and CEO, ATB Financial



VOLUNTEERS

We are incredibly grateful to our dedicated team of volunteers – every year they enrich the festival with their passion for film and community building! From photographing the festival’s most epic moments to ensuring films from around the world get on the big screen, they bring essential skills and manpower to the festival and help us grow each and every year.



FILM CIRCLE

Film Circle and its patrons play a vital role at CIFF by supporting the festival’s activities, with a particular emphasis on fostering emerging artists and young filmmakers. These supporters have made a personal philanthropic, tax-receiptable donation to support CIFF which is a registered charity. They are our partners in building an amazing festival and bringing incredible experiences to Calgary.

This year’s new Film Circle lounge location was a tranquil oasis where members and filmmakers were able to relax and share film experiences between screenings. Close to 400 people used the lounge over the course of the festival.



Thank you to the 2019 Film Circle Patrons!

FILM CIRCLE MEMBERS

Platinum

Dan O’Reilly

Gold

Jackie Flanagan, Kelly Hewson, Gil Hopkins, D’Arcy Levesque, Joe Novak, Becky & Terry Rock, Cody Slater/Bernadette Geronazzo

Silver

Zahra Allidina/Ali Tejpar, Kristin Anderson, Matthew Beswick, Ann Boerner, Sebastien Gittens, Ernest Hon, Lindsay Horne/Karen Cosenza, Nevena Ivanovic, Sarah Kellow, Jill MacKenzie, Judy MacLachlan/John Dean, Ann McCaig, Lynn Moen, Lori Montgomery, Paul Moore/Susan Swan, Tammy Mowatt, Marcella Munro, Lara Pella/Geoff Holub, Alison Pettigrew, James Pettigrew, Brad Pierce, Alan Ross, Mary Rozsa de Coquet, Becky Scott, Michelle Seaman, Arlene Strom/Colin Jackson, Domenic Venturo, Richard Waller, Peter Wallis, Doug Wong, Helen Zenith, Darren Zwack

Honorary Patrons

Amanda Forbis, Ernest Hon, Tom Jackson, Ann McCaig, Joe Novak, James Pettigrew, Andrew Phung, Kelly Streit, Wendy Tilby, Peter Wallis, Brett Wilson, Domenic Venturo, and Helen Zenith

“Film Circle is my way of expressing my love of films and the experience of a world class film festival, as well as helping Calgary become the type of city I know it can be.”

– Matthew Beswick, Film Circle Member

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

PRESENTING PARTNER



MAJOR FESTIVAL PARTNERS



PUBLIC FUNDERS



GALA & SPECIAL SCREENING PARTNERS



AWARD PARTNERS



BEHIND THE SCREEN PARTNERS



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