

First Recipients of Rogers Indigenous Film Fund Program Announced by Creative BC

VANCOUVER, BC | May 31, 2023 – Creative BC is pleased to name 11 grant recipients in the first round of early project development funding under the \$1 million Rogers Indigenous Film Fund (RIFF) Program. This round of funding represents a \$200,000 investment as part of the Fund, with each recipient receiving up to \$20,000 in financing assistance for early development work of a new project, or ‘next phase’ early development work of an existing project.

Designed in close consultation with the Indigenous community and industry, the RIFF Program invests in local content creation for Indigenous filmmakers and creatives alike, to develop new works or to continue early development of proposed work.

The Program is part of the Reel Focus BC suite of programs delivered by Creative BC, and is designed to advance First Nations, Métis and Inuit domestic motion picture activity and the creation of Indigenous-owned intellectual property. The program was created to complement other funding supports that encourage and enable Indigenous filmmakers and creatives to produce content from concept to full production with the support of Creative BC and other funding agencies.

Uniquely, this funding supports individuals and companies to cover activities such as research and development, community engagement, and scriptwriting. Specific to the RIFF Program, applicants and recipients will have access to online professional development resources throughout the duration of the RIFF Program and beyond.

This is the first of three Creative BC-delivered programs to be offered through 2024 and funded by the Rogers Group of Funds. These programs build on the first RIFF-supported investment of \$200K into a partnership with the Indigenous Screen Office through which Development Fund recipients were provided top-up grants.

The following 11 individuals are the successful recipients of the first intake for the RIFF Program:

1. **Justin Ducharme**, Seventeen
A creative and beloved two-spirited woman’s day off is consumed by family grievances and her messy friends’ discovery that she has less than 24 hours to find her missing passport and leave the country.
Amount/Type: \$13,000
2. **Brianne Island**, Cahcahkapew Piyesis
An animated short about an urban Indigenous woman and her “language spirit” – cahcahkapew piyesis. They journey through abstract Woodland art stylized worlds exploring identity, belonging, and ancestral knowledge rooted in language.
Amount/Type: \$20,000
3. **Leena Minifie** | Stories First Productions, The Good Canadian
The Good Canadian reveals the inner workings of the genocide happening in Canada now against Indigenous peoples. The film is part investigation, part real-life horror story part national reckoning.
Amount/Type: \$20,000
4. **Esteban Manuel**, *çka?*
çka? (Doubt) is a feature length script: Forlorn by romance, Nathan Kooka can’t find love on his

reservation. After seeing a girl in town, he decides to put a love spell on her, only then to realize that there is more to the spell than he anticipated.

Amount/Type: \$20,000

5. **Ryan David Lee Dickie**, Fourth Sister to the Land
Tiffany Traverse, self-described chicken chaser and 'fourth sister to the land', is on a mission to reconnect Indigenous communities with the seeds of their past.
Amount/Type: \$20,000
6. **Quanah Napoleon**, Beneath the Surface
“Beneath the Surface” is the multi-chapter journey of a Trans Cree Woman from childhood to adulthood, as told through a series of music videos from the upcoming album “Surface.” The chapters are a love letter to the found family who were there from day one.
Amount/Type: \$20,000
7. **K.C Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson** | Raven Calling Productions, Kilyahda – Roots of Haida Law
This project will create a documentary film treatment, supported by research for submission to potential producers and funders, for Kilyahda – Roots of Haida Law.
Amount/Type: \$20,000
8. **Eva Grant** | Tooth & Nail Pictures, Entity
One summer night in the wilderness of present-day BC, 26-year-old Mia and her five-year-old daughter Phoenix arrive at Mia’s abandoned childhood homestead. Mia has raised Phoenix off the grid since she was sterilized without her consent shortly after Phoenix’s birth, but now wants to reconnect with her community to give her gifted daughter a chance at a normal life.
Amount/Type: \$20,000
9. **Justin Neal**, Hole in the Donut
Hole in the Donut is a comedic twist on the somber addiction narrative. An original series dramedy, the story follows two hipster drunks as they crash-land into recovery and into the arms of a famous actor, who’s secretly shooting up again.
Amount/Type: \$10,000
10. **Jay Cardinal Villeneuve**, Nôhcimihk
Nôhcimihk (in the bush) tells the story of a young Nêhiyawî- Cree Métis girl who is stranded alone at her family hunting cabin deep in the boreal forest of Treaty 8 territory in northern Alberta during a new wave of the pandemic.
Amount/Type: \$12,150
11. **Tanner Zurkoski** | Two Hounds Media
Too-Mook (Kingfisher in Barkley Dialect Nuu-Chah-Nulth) is a feature length documentary project focused on the events leading up to the 1864 Kingfisher incident off the coast of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Ahousaht village of Maaqtusiis, and the fallout from it.
Amount/Type: \$20,000

Read the [Creative BC Q+A: Targeted Program Design for Indigenous Filmmakers, Reflections and Approaches to the Rogers Indigenous Film Fund Program \(RIFF Program\)](#).

To learn more about RIFF, visit Creative BC’s website: www.creativebc.com/services/funding-programs/domestic-motion-picture-programs/reel-focus-bc/indigenous-fund/

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QUOTES:**Robin Mirsky, Director, Rogers Group of Funds**

"Each of the recipients selected for the Rogers Indigenous Film Fund represents a voice that needs to be heard, with creative ideas and concepts that will truly help educate and inform us in meaningful ways. Through Rogers Group of Funds, we are committed to investing in and removing barriers for Indigenous content creators, while continuing to champion Indigenous voices as part of our collective journey towards reconciliation."

Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

"Congratulations to the recipients! We applaud the Rogers Group of Funds and Creative BC for their leadership and providing support to Indigenous creators and their stories. This initiative also supports important goals of reconciliation and equity, diversity and inclusion. I can't wait to watch these creators' stories on screen".

Bob D'Eith, Parliamentary Secretary for Arts and Film

"B.C. has such amazing Indigenous creators. We want to share their stories with the world. I commend Creative BC and the Rogers Group of Funds for proactively supporting Indigenous storytellers and filmmakers through this innovative partnership."

Prem Gill, CEO, Creative BC

"Creative BC is tremendously proud to announce the first 11 Indigenous filmmakers and creatives receiving support through the ongoing Rogers Indigenous Film Fund Program. These emerging, early and mid-career First Nations, Métis and Inuit creators will develop their careers and high-quality, market-ready content, through funding, business support, and mentorship. We look forward to seeing these stories and projects progress to the big screen."

Kerry Swanson, CEO, Indigenous Screen Office (ISO)

"ISO congratulates the first 11 recipients of Rogers Indigenous Film Fund Program. This new investment to support Indigenous storytellers on screens demonstrates the ongoing commitment of Creative BC to support an Indigenous screen sector in the province. We look forward to continuing to work together on this shared vision."

Justin Ducharme, RIFF Program Recipient

"Being an independent filmmaker who makes work from an experiential point of view, financial support through development is key to not only ensuring myself and my communities are accurately portrayed and represented on screen but also acts as proof that our stories and experiences are valued in an industry that has histories of being inherently extractive. Having the support from Creative BC and the Rogers Indigenous Film Fund to take my script through a final community consultation phase gives me the chance to bring community members directly into the creative process and have their voices and opinions heard in regards to the stories we tell and consume."

About Creative BC

Creative BC is an independent society created and supported by the provincial government to sustain

and help grow British Columbia's creative industries: motion picture, interactive and digital media, music and sound recording, and magazine and book publishing. The organization delivers a wide range of programs and services with a mandate to expand B.C.'s creative economy. These activities include administration of the provincial government's motion picture tax credit programs, delivery of program funding and export marketing support for the sector, and provincial film commission services. Combined, these activities serve to attract inward investment and market B.C. as a partner and destination of choice for domestic and international content creation. The society acts as an industry catalyst and ambassador to help B.C.'s creative sector reach its economic, social, environmental, and creative potential both at home and globally. Website: www.creativebc.com

About Rogers Group of Funds

Since 1980, the Rogers Group of Funds has supported Canada's independent film and television producers with more than \$676 million through three different types of funding. Rogers Telefund offers loans to Canadian independent producers; Rogers Documentary Fund, Canada's premier source of funding for documentary films; and Rogers Cable Network Fund, an equity investor in Canadian programs with a first play on a Canadian cable channel. Three different types of financing. Three different funds. All from one source – Rogers. For more information, visit rogersgroupoffunds.com.