



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT November 2020 to October 2021

### Overview

Overall things are trucking along!

Despite Covid-19 FilmPEI was able to continue operations with only one circuit breaker shut down of the office for two weeks during December. FilmPEI currently operates within the constraints set out by Public Health as they are announced. The organization continues to be financially and administratively stable. Income from rentals is up about 20% from this time last year. Reports from across the sector are that this was the busiest year for local production yet.

The number of members is 135 “active” (paid up to date) and 224 “pending renewal” of whom about 30 we anticipate will renew, bringing up our total active member count to 165.

The big news this year is the Province’s announcement of the PEI Film Production Fund which will go a long way to making PEI competitive in the national filmmaking sector.

Projects currently underway include a comprehensive series of workshops which will be a scaffold for crew to become industry set ready in the 2022 season.

#### Current Staff

- Executive Director - Renee Laprise
- Operations/Business Development – Omar Broderick
- Technical Director - Thomas Mears
- Executive Assistant/Communications – Daniel Brown (Young Canada Works)
- Technical Assistant – Spencer Younker (Skills Work Experience)
- Digital Education Designer/Animation Instructor - Teresa Kuo (DS4Y)
- Contract techs - Shane Pendergast and Ali MacDonald

## Funding

### **Canada Council**

FilmPEI is in its second year of four for Canada Council core funding (\$73,000/year).

The Media Arts Acquisition fund was successful this year - \$30k of equipment was purchased.\*

\*to be discussed in tech report

### **Innovation PEI**

Operational funding from the Province of PEI has been approved for this fiscal (\$50,000).

Film4Ward 2022 has been approved by Innovation PEI (\$100,000) and by Telefilm Canada (\$15,000).

All projects are up to date as far as reporting and drawdowns.

Currently, FilmPEI receives a rent incentive from Innovation PEI that covers 50% of our rent.

This was extended until March 2022, however that will be our last time accessing support funds and we are currently looking for ways to deal with that shortfall in our next budget.

## Projects (2020)

### **Film4Ward 2020**

Due to Covid-19 the 2020 program was delayed. Three of those films were completed and delivered by the summer of 2021. One project could not be shot so those funds were diverted to a Black Cultural Society project to be completed at a future date. Training to date includes:

- writing workshops in the fall of 2019
- producer workshops during 2019 and 2020
- art of lighting in Feb of 2020
- acting workshops through the summer 2020
- targeted mentorships including directing and producing

### **Art In the Open**

FilmPEI typically supports AITO with \$500 cash, as well as in kind gear rental. The summer of 2020 we supported the Black Film Festival during AITO with \$1000 cash and administrative assistance.

### **PEI Screenwriters' Bootcamp 2020**

This project was postponed until 2021 but a spin off program, **Writers' Edge**, was delivered in the fall. This was a seven-day writing retreat for female PEI screenwriters in Victoria by the Sea. A mentor gave the retreat participants instruction virtually and a female Mi'kmaq team were paired up with a screenwriter to help develop their TV series.

### **Diverse Voices Project**

This was a joint program with MusicPEI to create THREE music videos using emerging musicians and directors from the LGBTQ2S+ and BIPOC communities. Directors chosen were Sean Lush, Jessie Duarte and Gessy Robin. Teams were led by established filmmakers Ryan McCarvill and Mille Clarkes. Filming took pace in December 2020. Funding provided by MusicPEI and the Canada Council Covid Emergency fund.

### **Film Industry Fundamentals**

In January 2021 this comprehensive introductory course led by Jenna MacMillan was presented via zoom with a weekend in person hands on component. The course familiarizes people with all aspects of film/TV production to get them set ready for work as PA's and other support roles. The course was delivered free of charge to 13 participants at least 3 of whom went onto at least entry level jobs in the industry. Curriculum developed by Jenna MacMillan and Holland College. Funded by ACOA, Skills PEI and Innovation PEI. There were several visiting guests from the industry.

### **FilmPEI Signature Award for MusicPEI Awards**

This is the first year that FilmPEI hands out a signature award for best music video. We were excited to support this effort. Congratulations Jenna MacMillan and Kinley Dowling!

### **Projects (April 2021 to present)**

#### **Film4Ward 2021**

Applications are due this December. Workshops will be taking place in the winter. Currently an 8-week Intro to Producing workshop in just wrapping. Projects are slated to shoot between February and late April.

#### **Diverse Voices Project 2021**

This is a joint program with MusicPEI to create THREE music videos using emerging musicians MusicPEI will be choosing the musicians first and then FilmPEI will put out the call for directors. We will not be limiting the age this year.

#### **Film Industry Fundamentals**

A second version of this course ran in September with 7 participants. They were to watch the 50 hours of recorded content from the zoom presentations in the winter and then gathered for 24 hours of in person instruction at FilmPEI's studio. Jenna MacMillan led this as well. There were several visiting guests from the industry.

#### **Road to Production**

This comprehensive masterclass series is taking skilled local crew and training them for working under a key on a feature/TV series. Several roles from the production office, set and post-production will be focused on. Because of the delay of funding we were not able to run this as planned last winter so we had to wait for the film season to settle before we could bring in trainers. Several courses have occurred and more are being rolled out.

We partnered with NSI to build a program to help develop our local producers with pitchable projects. This was a month long intensive course and the 5 producers went on to the Pitch For Your Life competition held last week. The funders are Canada Media Fund and Skills PEI.

### **PEI Screenwriters' Bootcamp May/June 2021 – Writers' Intensive**

Hosting the event virtually allowed us to increase the number of workshops and accommodate a larger number of participants. We purposely kept the groups small so that each writer would get the attention they need, but we increased the introductory and advanced workshops for feature films from one to two.

The writing for TV remained as one workshop as well as the writing for the web workshop.

In total, we offered six workshops. We received thirty-seven submissions and thirty-one were accepted. In terms of regional distribution, eighteen are from PEI; one from NB; four from NS; and seven from NL. All who submitted from PEI were accepted and the quality of submissions has greatly improved in recent years, which bodes well for our industry.

In the meantime, we are devoting our energy and time to re-branding our programs to improve on our application process and increase our relevance and presence across the board.

### **PEI Screenwriters' Bootcamp October 2021 - Industry Day**

On October 21, leading into the Charlottetown Film Festival, Bootcamp ran and Industry Day.

*Series, Who's Making Them and Why?* CBC Toronto - Sarah Quan, CBC Exec and Micah Keenan, Comedy and Drama Development Manager, Marni Goldman, Production Executive Original Lifestyle Content for Corus; Carly McGowan from IPF and Nancy Chapelle from Bell Fund. I was thinking you would be a good moderator. What do you think? If not, can you suggest someone?

*Documentary Filmmaking in the 21st Century* - Paul Gardner; Bell Fibe TV; Ann Bernier, Producer, Auguste Content; Elizabeth Klinck, Visual Researcher and Clearance Specialist; Donna Davies, Moderator.

The **Pitch for Your Life** competition was held virtually and closed to the public. Our 5 producers that went through the NSI training pitched to Alexander from Corus, Chris Kelly from Bell Media and Stewart Young from CBC for a \$15000 cash proof of concept prize. The pitches were all very solid and the final winner was Susan Rodgers!

### **ART IN THE OPEN**

We had a signature media arts project happening in Art In the Open this year led by Norah Pendergast. It featured the work of internationally recognized digital media artists. Tasmin Richardson had a talk at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery and did a live media arts performance the night of. Patricia Bourque photographed all the events. This project ended up receiving a lot of funding from provincial and Federal partners.

### **Writers' Edge**

This ran earlier this month and was a great success. The Writer's Edge, a women's screenwriting retreat for writers with advanced projects in development. Robin Sutherland, Susan Rodgers, Cheryl Wagner, and Toni Mills. Four screenwriters spent seven days incubating their individual projects with the support of mentors Sharon Buckingham and Donna Davies.

The activity was held October 3 to 10 at the Victoria Cottages in beautiful Victoria-by-the-Sea where the writers could work with very few distractions other than the sound of birds and the wind. The retreat has operated as a pilot project for the past five years and will eventually become an extension of the PEI Screenwriters' Bootcamp creating an incubator approach to project development.

Funding for has been provided by Film PEI, WIFT-AT, and Innovation PEI.

### **FilmPEI Best PEI Director Award – Charlottetown Film Festival**

2021 is the inaugural year for the FilmPEI award at the Charlottetown Film Festival. The festival jury chose this year's winner Adam Perry!

FilmPEI and the ChFF will be working together more in the future to bolster each other's efforts.

### ONGOING MEMBER SERVICES

FilmPEI staff are highly skilled and offer individualized training to our members on an ongoing basis. The following are just a few examples of how we support our members on a daily basis:

- Thomas regularly trains members on how to use specific gear – ie gimbal, Blackmagic, audio
- Both Omar and Thomas troubleshoot tech and offer advice on best practices to members on gear and tech use
- Omar and Thomas have developed a 1-hour introduction to film for our young filmmakers visiting the facility – this will be something offered to schools in the coming year.
- Renee frequently offers career counselling advice for members and offers one on one mentorships for producers, editors and animators
- Renee, Omar and Thomas act as mentors and trainers for all of the temporary staff that come into FilmPEI – all temporary positions are treated as training grounds for people to further develop their skills in the film industry

### Conclusion

FilmPEI spent years of time and resources lobbying for the revival of the PEI film industry supports. Thanks to these efforts and the efforts of some tenacious folks in the industry and in the government, it finally happened! The new PEI Film Production Fund and other local production supports will change the landscape of the film industry on PEI very quickly. Our local talent will finally be able to make a livelihood in their chosen sector and FilmPEI can now put our focus on supporting and developing the local talent and industry.

As your arts co-op we will continue to develop more robust and comprehensive creative/skill development supports and resources for members to produce their work.

As your industry association we intend to develop databases, job boards, liaise with local and off-Island producers to ensure local talent is hired and able to thrive on set, and work with the province to ensure a sustainable and successful local industry.

FilmPEI and the local film community have done so much in such a short time. We should be very proud of ourselves! But we should also be prepared for a little discomfort over the next year as we all grow and change. There will be highs and lows, challenges and wins but we need to keep an eye on the big picture; an active film industry that is thriving and sustainable.

We are at a moment in time where we can make this industry what we want it to be. But that's going to take a common vision and team work . I encourage all of us in this industry to come together and speak with one voice to build something that works for all us.