"Please don't stop doing this. It's inclusive and it continues to strengthen the idea that these kids count, these communities count, and that people all over Canada are ready to listen to them."

— Cathy Elliott, Program Director, DAREarts
REEL CANADA

WHO WE ARE

REEL CANADA is a charitable organization whose mission is to introduce new audiences to the power and diversity of Canadian film. Our travelling film festival has held nearly 1,200 screenings and reached more than 600,000 students — and it just keeps growing.

WHAT WE DO

Our work is delivered via three core programmes:

Our Films in Our Schools: For over 11 years, we have helped teachers and students across Canada organize over one thousand screenings of Canadian film, providing educational resources to facilitate classroom integration.

Welcome to Canada: We introduce new Canadians to Canadian film and culture through festival events designed specifically for English-language learners of all ages.

National Canadian Film Day (NCFD): An annual one-day event where Canadians from coast to coast get together to watch a great Canadian film — across all major platforms, online, and in theatres. Save the date: April 19, 2017!

Each of these initiatives incorporates the wealth of incredible work created by Indigenous filmmakers.

WHY WE DO IT

We believe — and our audiences confirm — that seeing oneself on film can be a profound and transformative experience. Canadian film depicts the unique experience of Canadians in a way that the commercial marketplace generally does not provide. For young people and newcomers especially, who are actively engaged in understanding their place in the world, Canadian movies offer a way to see themselves and consider the qualities and values that define us.

Movies are a mirror. Canadian movies reflect the Canadian experience. Great Canadian movies tell us who we are as individuals and have the power to help bring us together as a country.

GET INVOLVED

WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Calling all champions of Indigenous film! We’re looking to partner with communities in every corner of the country — no matter how remote — to expand our Indigenous programming for National Canadian Film Day 150. REEL CANADA can offer programming support, promotional materials, and even a screening party kit — entirely free of charge. If you are interested in attending or hosting an event in your community on April 19, 2017, contact us at ncfd@reelcanada.ca.
GET INVOLVED
IN YOUR CLASSROOM
We bring Canadian films to high school students in grades 9 to 12 with a one-day film festival programmed by the participants themselves. Festival events can serve audiences of any size, from just a few classrooms to a whole school. Best of all, we offer these festivals to schools entirely FREE OF CHARGE!

The films in our Indigenous Film Programme may be incorporated into a larger festival of Canadian film or selected on their own for specially-themed events. They provide rich opportunities for dialogue whether for Indigenous, non-Indigenous or mixed audiences.

Films in this programme feature the voices and stories of Abenaki, Algonquin, Anishinaabek, Cree, Gwich’in, Inuit, Métis, Mi’kmaq, Iroquois, Mohawk, Northern Tutchone, Ojibwa, Saulteaux, Tsilhqot’in and other nations.

LESSON PLANS
AND RESOURCES
With hundreds of school screenings under our belt, we can give you effective tools to get your colleagues and students excited about your event, and work with you to create a festival that will resonate with your community.

We offer:

- Film-specific lesson plans for all feature films in this programme
- Lesson plans for Indigenous and Native studies courses
- Lesson plans about Canadian film and storytelling for grades 9 to 12 English and media courses
- Games, quizzes and other resources to help teachers bring this important part of our culture to their students.

“Our students and staff cannot stop talking about this awesome experience.”
— Ngozi Okongwu, Teacher, Middlefield CI, Markham, ON

Email contactus@reelcanada.ca or call 1-855-733-5709 to start planning a festival or to access our resources.
INTRODUCTION FROM DENISE BOLDUC

“Education is the key to reconciliation, but only a true and complete experience in education can pave the path to relationships built on mutual respect and peaceful co-existence between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal classmates, neighbours and community members in this country.”

— Statement from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, University of Manitoba

Over the past 10 years, REEL CANADA has taken a passionate lead to develop long-term, respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. Indigenous representation on its Board of Directors, strong partnerships with organizations such as the world-renowned imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival and the Toronto District School Board’s Aboriginal Education Centre, professional development through culture-specific training for REEL CANADA staff, and the nurturing of ties with Indigenous filmmakers are just a few important and worthy examples of REEL CANADA’s commitment. Most importantly, the organization has made a point of seamlessly including high-quality films both by and about Indigenous peoples in its catalogue of Canadian films.

It is an incredible privilege to be a part of this dedicated team, working to further explore, expand and build relationships and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous filmmakers, educators, learners and communities.

The Indigenous Film Programme is an amazing resource designed to spark dialogue. It offers a fabulous diversity of stories by distinctive Indigenous voices — stories that will directly stimulate the natural ‘cultural curiosity’ of learners. Young learners are the leaders of tomorrow — future advocates for change whose influence will ensure that cultural differences are respected, valued and celebrated. These films foster an appreciation of the diverse cultures and experiences of the Indigenous peoples of this land. They increase mutual respect and understanding. They instill pride.

I look forward to witnessing and sharing stories from our collection and strengthening relationships among all the communities of this country.

Miigwech,

Denise Bolduc
Anishinaabe (Batchewana Band Member / Great Lakes Ojibwa)
Manager, of the Indigenous Film Programme, REEL CANADA
THE FILMS

We are committed to celebrating the work of Indigenous filmmakers and believe in the importance of telling their stories in their voice and from their point of view. Please note: Our use of the term Indigenous is inclusive of Métis, Inuit, Status and Non-Status peoples.

LEGEND

Denotes films written, directed or produced by Indigenous artists.

Denotes films made by non-Indigenous artists, but which include significant Indigenous themes.*

Denotes films that are appropriate for English-language learners.

Denotes films that contain mature subject matter.

Denotes films that were produced by the National Film Board of Canada.

NOTES ON FILM RATINGS

Our catalogue lists the Ontario Film Review Board’s ratings for each film. To check the rating of a particular film in other provinces and territories, please consult the film’s page on our website, www.reelcanada.ca/films.

The rating “NR” denotes a film that has never received theatrical distribution and was therefore never rated by any provincial government film ratings agencies.

* Included in the Programme are films by non-Indigenous artists. We have included these films as their stories feature Indigenous actors and/or offer a nuanced portrayal of Indigenous characters, histories and lifestyles. Indigenous educators have screened these works and found them to be valuable learning resources.

For the complete REEL CANADA catalogue of great Canadian films, visit www.reelcanada.ca or write to contactus@reelcanada.ca.
ATANARJUAT: THE FAST RUNNER

Based on an ancient Inuit legend, Atanarjuat is an epic tale of love, betrayal and revenge. The beautiful Atuat (Ivalu) has been promised to the short-fused Oki (Arnatsiaq), the son of the tribe's leader. However, she loves the good-natured Atanarjuat (Ungalaaq), a fast runner and excellent hunter. When Atanarjuat is forced to battle the jealous Oki for Atuat's hand, the events that follow determine not only his fate, but that of his people.

Atanarjuat won 20 awards, including eight Genies and the Caméra d'Or at the 2001 Cannes Film Festival.

“I am not surprised that The Fast Runner has been a box office hit... It is unlike anything most audiences will ever have seen, and yet it tells a universal story.”
— Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times

NOTE: Due to the unusually long run time of this film, if you would like to screen Atanarjuat, please contact us to discuss the logistics.

ANGRY INUK

We all know about the terrible “brutality” of the arctic seal hunt—or do we? Turns out there are other sides to this story: it's the story of families that need to be fed, the story of a hunting practice that began centuries ago, and the story of a tradition that is central to the economy and food security of Inuit communities in the Canadian Arctic. Angry Inuk contains a story that's over 4,000 years old.

The seal hunt is not exactly a laughing matter, but humour and technical savvy go a long way to debunk certain claims. Wryly tackling both misinformation and aggressive appeals to emotion, Inuk filmmaker Arnaquq-Baril equips herself and her community with the powers of social media — and yes, #sealfies — to reframe a controversial topic as a cultural issue in this 2016 Audience Award-winning Hot Docs hit.

“Angry Inuk delivers important information about an issue we tend to think we know everything about, and delivers a powerful emotional punch.”
— Susan G. Cole, NOW Magazine

CLUB NATIVE

On the Mohawk reserve of Kahnawake, outside of Montreal, there are two unspoken rules: don’t marry a white person, and don’t have a child with one. The consequences of ignoring these rules can be dire — loss of membership on the reserve for yourself and your child. For those who incur them, the results can be devastating.

In this honest and affecting doc, filmmaker Tracey Deer follows the stories of four Kahnawake women whose lives have been affected by these rules, shedding light on contemporary Indigenous identity and asking questions about how we all understand who we are.

With her own family as a poignant case study, Deer’s film will strike a chord with anyone who’s ever thought about ethnicity, culture or their place in the world.

You could hear a pin drop in the auditorium!
— Teacher, Maniwaki Woodland School, Maniwaki, QC
EMPIRE OF DIRT


When single mom Lena (Gee) realizes that her daughter (Eyre) may be in danger of succumbing to the same addiction issues she herself faced, she decides to leave the city and return home to her estranged mother (Podemski) in the rural Indigenous community of her youth. The homecoming forces Lena to deal with her past and raises issues that test all three generations of this family of spirited women.

Powerful and inspiring, Empire of Dirt was nominated for five Canadian Screen Awards, including Best Picture.

"Empire of Dirt tells a traditional mothers-and-daughters story in a new way by making their Cree heritage and the role it has in their lives and relationships the true heart of the drama."
— Linda Barnard, The Toronto Star

GRADING 11–12

REEL INJUN


Reel Injun is an enlightening documentary about the way Indigenous people have been depicted in film from the silent era to the present day. Chock-full of clips from hundreds of films and packed with interviews with famous Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors, directors and writers, Reel Injun is an entertaining and insightful look at how the powerful medium of film both reflects and influences culture.

Director Neil Diamond takes the audience on a trip through time to explore the history of the “Hollywood Indian” and offers a refreshing, candid and personal analysis, tracing how these cinematic images have shaped and influenced the understanding of Indigenous culture and history.

“Impeccably well researched and crafted, Reel Injun neatly walks the line in balancing entertainment and education.”
— Todd Brown, ScreenAnarchy

TRICK OR TREATY?


One of the masters of Canadian documentary cinema, Alanis Obomsawin has spent decades chronicking the injustices against Indigenous communities, creating a remarkable body of work. In her latest film, she digs into the difficult history of Treaty 9, the infamous 1905 agreement in which First Nations communities allegedly relinquished their sovereignty over their traditional lands.

Setting the film within the context of a resurgence of First Nations activism (Chief Theresa Spence’s hunger strike and the Idle No More movement), Obomsawin interviews legal, historical and cultural experts — as well as people whose ancestors were present when the treaty was signed — to explore some fundamental questions about Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples: In signing Treaty 9, what did First Nations chiefs think they were agreeing to? What were they told they were agreeing to? And was the treaty deliberately misrepresented?

“Obomsawin’s documentaries inform, inspire, and shock us. Trick or Treaty? is no different.” — Nadya Domingo, Toronto Film Scene
MAÏNA
(2013) Director: Michel Poulette. Screenwriter: Pierre Billon. Starring: Roseanne Supernault (Cree/Métis), Ipeelie Ootoova (Inuk), Graham Greene (Oneida), Tantoo Cardinal (Cree/Métis), Renelitta Arluk (Gwich’in and Chipewyan-Cree). 102 minutes. PG (Inuktituk with English subtitles)

Maïna is an intimate yet epic adventure story set in the far north in the time before the arrival of the Europeans.

During a bloody battle between Innu and Inuit, a young Innu boy is captured in the fray. Embarking on a dangerous mission that will forever change her life, Maïna (Supernault), the daughter of an Innu grand chief, promises to venture into enemy territory to rescue him.

Soon after she begins her quest, Maïna is herself captured by an Inuk leader (Ootoova), and together they must navigate the perilous journey to the “Land of Ice.”

Based on the novel by award-winning author Dominique Demers, this gripping and visually-stunning film was nominated for three Jutras and six Canadian Screen Awards, including Best Picture.

THE SNOW WALKER

When Arctic bush pilot Charlie Halliday (Pepper) is given two rare walrus tusks by a group of Inuit, he agrees to fly a mission of mercy, transporting a sick girl (Piugattuk) to a hospital. It’s the early 1950s, and the brash pilot has flown through the Arctic for years without seriously thinking about the people who live there or how they survive.

Everything changes when Charlie’s plane goes down in the wilderness, leaving him alone with the young girl. Forced to rely on each other, the two form a bond of friendship as the summer months quickly end and winter’s harsh conditions begin to take hold. Based on a story by acclaimed Canadian author Farley Mowat, this is a beautifully rendered tale set in the gorgeous, desolate Arctic. The Snow Walker’s director (Smith) also played a key role in an earlier Mowat adaptation, Never Cry Wolf.

“The Snow Walker is a powerful, poignant and transcendent film.”
— Bruce Kirkland, Jam! Movies

THE WHALE

This touching documentary tells the story of a young killer whale named Luna, who gets separated from his family on the rugged west coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Rambunctious, surprising, and like a visitor from another planet, Luna endears himself to the community with his determination to make contact, leading to many unexpected consequences.

The Whale charts the competing efforts of various community groups, including local families, nearby business owners, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and perhaps most significantly, the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation, as they each struggle to help Luna survive. Raising more questions than it can answer, the film is a truly compelling exploration of our relationship with animals.

The audience cheered, sighed, laughed and cried for Luna. The hearts of all viewers were captivated.
— Grade 12 student, Adam Scott CVI, Peterborough, ON
SHORT FILM PROGRAMME

SHORT FILMS BY INDIGENOUS ARTISTS

ANIMATION

MIA'
Amanda Strong (Métis), Bracken Hanuse Corlett (Yu'ik/Shukáhööste) 2015 8 min.
A young Indigenous street artist struggles to return home after being transformed into a salmon.

THE ORPHAN AND THE POLAR BEAR
Neil Christopher 2014 9 min.
Producers: Neil Christopher, Louise Fishbory (Inuk)
In this adaptation of an Inuit legend, a neglected orphan is adopted by a polar bear elder and, under the bear’s guidance, learns the skills he will need to survive.

TRADITIONAL HEALING
Raymond Caplin (Mi’kmaq) 2013 3 min.
In this beautiful animation, a woman’s sacred healing dance causes a miracle to occur in an otherwise bleak and devastated environment.

THE VISIT
Lisa Jackson (Anishinaabe) 2009 3 min.
The charming “true” story of an encounter between extraterrestrials and a Cree family.

DANGERS OF THE GRASS
Melanie Jackson (Métis/Saulteaux) 2009 2 min.
Spectacular stop-motion animation breathes life into a traditional dance.

EMPTY
Jackie Traverse (Anishinaabe) 2009 5 min.
Set to a song by Little Hawk, this animated story is a daughter’s starkly honest tribute to her estranged mother.

FIGHTING CHANCE
Alexandra Lazarowich (Cree) 2011 9 min.
An Indigenous youth with a family history of residential schooling, 13-year-old Joey is arrested and put into a group home where he gets a chance to turn his life around.

THE GIFT
Terril Calder (Métis) 2011 2 min.
This stop-motion tale explores the historical question of whether smallpox-infected blankets were given by European settlers to Indigenous populations unwittingly, or as a deadly “gift.”

AVILIAQ/ENTWINED
Alethea Arnaquq-Baril (Inuk) 2014 15 min. (Inuktitut with English subtitles)
In the 1950s, two Inuit women attempt to protect their relationship when pressure from their community forces them to marry men.

BAREFOOT
Dans Goulet (Cree/Métis) 2012 11 min.
In a tight-knit Cree community in northern Saskatchewan, 16-year-old Alyssa enjoys the attention that comes with pregnancy — until her secret plan unravels.

THE BLANKETING
Trevor Mack (Tsiiłhqot’in) 2013 8 min.
In the mid-1800s, the Tsiiłhqot’in First Nation of British Columbia was nearly wiped out by a devastating smallpox outbreak. The Blanketing depicts a fictional confrontation before the epidemic.

KAJUTAIJUQ: THE SPIRIT THAT COMES
Scott Brachmayer 2014 15 min.
Co-Producer/Co-Writer: Nyla Innuk (Inuk)
Part Inuit legend, part thriller, an Arctic hunter tries to live by the traditional skills his grandfather taught him — but they are difficult for a modern man to apply, and the price of failure is high.

QAGGIQ/GATHERING PLACE
Alethea Arnaquq-Baril (Inuk) 2014 15 min. (Inuktitut with English subtitles)
Conflicts arise when families in an Inuit camp build a communal igloo to celebrate the coming of spring with games, singing and drum dancing.

SPIRIT OF THE BLUEBIRD
Jesse Gouchey (Cree), Xstine Cook 2011 6 min.
A personal and poetic tribute by Cree artist Gouchey to Gloria Black Plume, a woman who was murdered in Calgary in March of 1999.

ABORIGINALITY
Dominique Keller, Tom Jackson (Cree) 2007 5 min.
A young boy is transported through his television set to the scene of a traditional Indigenous hoop dance, encountering his family’s cultural heritage in a new way.

DANCE
Ippiksaun Friesen (Inuk) 2014 4 min.
This gorgeously-rendered animation explores the way traditional hunting in Nunavut has evolved so that it can continue to play a vital role in contemporary Inuit culture.

ASSINI
J Jesse Gouchey (Cree), Xstine Cook 2015 13 min.
Seven-year-old Assini and her friends often play Cowboys and Indians. But when Assini discovers that she herself is an “Indian,” the game takes a new turn.

I never knew Canadians made such important films!
— Grade 11 student, East River CI, Winnipeg
DRAMA (Continued)

THROAT SONG
Miranda de Pencier 2011  16 min.
Executive producers: Alethea Amaqua-Baril (Inuk), Oqqaq Ellsworth (Inuk)
A young Inuit woman with a troubled past begins to connect with other victims of violence from her community and proclaims her voice along the way.

WAPAWEKKA
Danis Goulet (Cree/Métis)  2010  16 min.
Josh and his father visit their family cabin in Saskatchewan for the last time, confronting the generational differences between their Cree heritage and Josh's urban lifestyle.

WHERE THE RIVER WIDENS
Zach Greenleaf (Gesgapegiag)  2014  5 min.
A lyrical ode to the hard work, determination, and kinship of the fishermen of Gesgapegiag First Nation.

DOCTORITY

AGAINST THE GRAIN
Curtis Mandeville (Métis)  2009  24 min.
Survivors of the Indian residential school system attempt to cope with its impact on their personal lives and communities. A good primer for discussions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.

THE CREATOR'S GAME
Candace Maracle (Mohawk)  2011  41 min.
After being denied entry into Europe because of their Haudenosaunee passports, the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team are forced to forfeit their shot at the World Championship. A year later, we follow the team as they fight to bring the title and national sovereignty to their people.

HONEY FOR SALE
Amanda Strong (Cree-Métis)  2009  7 min.
The director focuses her camera on the tenuous life of a honeybee in this poetic and thoughtful meditation on the fragility of human existence.

INUIT HIGH KICK
Alethea Amaqua-Baril (Inuk)  2010  3 min.
A stunning slow-motion visual examination of an athlete performing the traditional Inuit high kick.

WAPAWEKKA

WHERE THE RIVER WIDENS

MÉMÈRE MÉTISSE
Janelle Wookey (Franco-Métis)  2008  30 min.
A young filmmaker explores her family's past as she schemes to convince her grandmother to accept her Métis heritage. Wookey's mischievous persistence uncovers a legacy of shame and the profound courage needed to overcome it.

MOHAWK GIRLS
Tracey Deer (Mohawk)  2005  55 min.
Three teens from the Kahnawake Indigenous community wrestle not only with decisions about their futures, like any teen, but also with the challenges of maintaining and embracing their Mohawk identity.

OVERBURDEN
Neil McArthur, Warren Carliou (Métis)  2009  15 min.
Indigenous communities in Alberta defend the environment, their health and way of life in the face of a destructive oil recovery enterprise.

RELEASED
Charital Rendeau (Northern Tutchone)  2015  10 min.
Karen Nicloux, an Indigenous embroidery artist from Yukon, has struggled with drug addiction, and time in prison, since a so-called friend offered her cocaine when she complained of a headache. This inspiring doc follows Nicloux's journey to stitch her life back together.

THE ROUTES
James McDougall (Anishinaabe)  2014  4 min.
A man cycles through his memories of the local women who have gone missing in his Anishinaabe community.

WAYS OF YESTERDAY
Elliott Simon (Anishinaabe)  2014  6 min.
Through breakdance and rap, Elliott, a rapper, and Curtis, a b-boy, share their life experiences and try to motivate and inspire Indigenous kids to follow their dreams.

EXPERIMENTAL

INDIGO
Amanda Strong (Cree-Métis)  2014  9 min.
Inspired by Indigenous stories and vividly-realized through stop-motion animation, a woman trapped in a cluttered space is freed by "Grandmother Spider," who still has some important webs to weave.

INUSHOP
Jobie Weetaluktuk (Inuk)  2009  2 min.
What is the state of Inuit culture on screen? Inuk filmmaker Weetaluktuk mixes archival reels with new footage to make this commentary on cultural appropriation.

LITTLE THUNDER
Nance Ackerman, Alan Sylibooy (Mi'kmaq)  2009  3 min.
Inspired by the Mi'kmaq legend "The Stone Canoe," this coming-of-age story follows a boy who reluctantly sets out on a canoe trip by himself, as a rite of passage into adulthood.

MOBILIZE
Caroline Monnet (Algonquin)  2015  2 min.
Mobilize repurposes footage from the NFB archives to explore the perpetual negotiation between the modern and the traditional by a people always moving forward.

WAVE A RED FLAG
Adam Garnet Jones (Cree/Métis)  2009  3 min.
A whimsical, wordless exploration of Indigenous identity, community and culture.
Our Voice. Our Stories. Our Culture.

The kind of dialogue REEL CANADA makes possible is so important for our young Canadians.
— Janelle Wookey, Franco-Métis filmmaker

Being able to talk to Jennifer Podemski was an amazing experience that I will always remember.
— Grade 12 student, W.F. Herman SS, Windsor, ON

REEL CANADA showed me that Canada actually makes really, really amazing movies, and that they tell great Canadian stories.
— Grade 9 student, Evan Hardy CI, Saskatoon

Thank you, REEL CANADA, for advocating for Aboriginal storytelling. We have much that we want to share with the world.
— Roseanne Supernault, Cree/Métis filmmaker

REEL CANADA provides a platform for sharing narratives amongst a younger audience who are in a pivotal time within our Canadian History that is educating our communities on allowing Indigenous voices and film to shine through.
— Michael Etherington, Omushkegowuk facilitator

REEL CANADA is really essential. For students to have access to film, and Canadian film especially — for them to see their own stories, especially in a country that gets so much other cinema — it’s just amazing.
— Danis Goulet, Cree/Métis filmmaker

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