



2021-22

REEL CANADA

Annual Report



MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDERS

Over the past couple of years, REEL CANADA has pivoted multiple times, from being all about the live connection we make at in-person screenings, to delivering an almost-entirely online experience to our many audiences, and back again.

For 17 seasons, we've grown with the evolving needs of our audience, shaping our educational and public programmes to best serve Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We've expanded our educational programmes from six schools in Toronto in our pilot season, to thousands of screenings each year in every province and territory. National Canadian Film Day (celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2023) has expanded from 70 events to over 1,000 annually, not only across Canada but around the world. We've also added Reel Opportunities, our fast-growing workforce development programme that introduces young people to the varied career opportunities available to them in the film industry, and connects them to the real pathways into those jobs.

As we've grown and changed, we've remained committed to expanding the audience for the unique, culturally and regionally diverse perspectives of our filmmakers, and to engage in lively discussions about identity and culture with our audiences. We've exceeded our own expectations in terms of numbers, growth, and positive feedback from our audiences and partners (some of which we'll share on these pages).

Thank you for continuing to celebrate Canadian film with us, and for sharing our belief in the power of these movies to inspire us, to lift us up, to make us think, and to unite us.

Yours in Canadian Film,
Jack Blum & Sharon Corder



INTRODUCTION

REEL CANADA is a charitable organization that celebrates Canada through film. Canadian films are the stories we tell about ourselves – they open the door to so many conversations about place, nation, identity, and what it means to be Canadian. REEL CANADA promotes the power and diversity of Canadian film and encourages this ongoing conversation.

WHY WE DO IT:

Canada is an incredibly diverse nation – and if our work has proven one thing, it's that Canadians of all backgrounds really do love seeing themselves and their neighbours reflected on screen. Watching a great Canadian film is an amazing way to celebrate our cultures and shared values. Film has the power to unite us as a nation.

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

All our programmes are offered entirely free of charge and are available in English or French. They include:

- Our Films in Our Schools is our founding programme, which serves thousands of students annually, from single classes to entire schools
- National Canadian Film Day (CanFilmDay), which brings an annual celebration of Canadian film to all Canadians.
- The Indigenous Film Programme, which highlights films made by Indigenous artists
- Welcome to Canada, which introduces new Canadians to Canadian film and culture through festival events designed specifically for English language learners of all ages.
- Reel Opportunities, launched in 2019, which is a national workforce development programme for the Canadian film industry.



REEL Canada is a great resource to learn through documentaries, movies and live seminars about our Canadian Identity. This organization is a hidden gem. I recommended it to any teachers.

DÉSIRÉE GABRIEL, LENDING LIBRARY USER



Learning about all the many jobs available in the film industry was eye-opening, I didn't know there were that many opportunities. I also loved listening to the guest speaker share their experience

STUDENT FROM ST. PETER'S
CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL - BARRIE



An engaging look into the exciting world of Canadian film. I particularly appreciated their commitment to highlighting diverse voices and careers in the industry that students may have never considered.

REEL OPPORTUNITIES WORKSHOP HOST



I personally loved every part of this course's structure. Getting hands-on instruction about the different positions on set helped me better understand what jobs I'll pursue in my own career.

REEL OPPORTUNITIES PHASE 2 PARTICIPANT



REEL CANADA's 'Anti-Racism Programme for Black History Month' was an extremely effective teaching tool. It provided me with engaging resources (four films and an interactive livestream event) and teaching ideas that allowed me to guide my Grade 6/7 students in increasing their understanding of racism, building empathy for those who experience racism, and learning about what they can do to stop racism. I would highly recommend this resource package and look forward to teaching with other REEL CANADA resources.

RCTV LIVESTREAM TEACHER PARTICIPANT

2022: THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS

- **131,091** students served across all educational programmes
- **75,000** students watched a great Canadian film in their classroom through our Lending Library.
- **50,000** students participated in RCtv Anti-Racism Livestreams
- **36,688** Lesson Plans were shared.
- Subscriptions to our teacher newsletter have **increased by 32%**
- **1560** screenings from the Indigenous Film Programme.
- **65,000** people attended our events on National Canadian Film Day
- On CanFilmDay, **2.5 million** people watched a Canadian film on broadcast or streaming services!
- **5533** youth participated in Reel Opportunities career workshops.
- **72 part-time jobs/internships** were created for youth across Canada via Reel Opportunities
- **261** Reel Opportunities workshops presented nationwide (for a grand total of 431 since the programme launch in January 2021)
- **71% of participants** felt *highly* prepared to pursue a career in the film and television industry following Reel Opportunities Popup Film School programming.

2022: CALENDAR OF HIGHLIGHTS

AUGUST 2021

Launched an Educational Resources Database on our website, allowing teachers to see all lesson plans available and streamline the request process, removing barriers to access.

OCTOBER 2021

Redesigned our Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test resources as a digital resource that was requested by more teachers than ever before (a 32% increase over the previous year).

DECEMBER 2021

Held our first-ever French-language Livestream, featuring interactive Q&As with special guests, and a roundtable discussion with nearly 10,500 students.

FEBRUARY 2022

Hosted our first livestream for middle schools, attended by over 15,000 students.

APRIL 2022

Welcome to Canada's National Livestream! RBC Emerging Artist Anna Lambe presents *The Grizzlies*.

JUNE 2022

Commissioned a research study in partnership with Telefilm Canada, Creative BC, Ontario Creates, and VICE Media GroupInsights.

JULY 2021

Created a set of bilingual anti-racism lesson plans and resources for high school educators to use when showing films that address these topics in the classroom

SEPTEMBER 2021

Launched our 17th season of educational programming and published our annual film catalogue.

NOVEMBER 2021

Added 5 staff members to the REEL CANADA team, and relaunched a robust Comms Department helmed by two new managers.

JANUARY 2022

Milestone reached: our Reel Opportunities programme surpasses 10,000 participants.

MARCH 2022

Celebrated the 2nd Anniversary of the online lending library, which serves nearly 2000 teachers annually.

MAY 2022

First Reel Opportunities Popup Film School session in partnership with the National Screen Institute provides hands-on film training to youth in Regina.



LENDING LIBRARY

REEL CANADA's Lending Library allows teachers to easily borrow and screen great Canadian films in their classes, all completely free of charge. By filling out an online form, teachers gain access to any film in our curated catalogue, as well as the corresponding curriculum-based lesson plans tailored to each feature film we offer.

This year, through the Lending Library alone, REEL CANADA provided 1,507 feature films and 1,113 short films to 794 teachers across the country who together screened the films to a combined audience of nearly 75,000 students!

LESSON PLANS

REEL CANADA Lesson Plans allow teachers to easily tie any of our programmes or films directly into their curriculum. They cover a wide variety of subjects, from Social Studies to English, Science to Visual Art, and ESL to French.

This school year, more than **36,680 lessons** were sent to more than 1900 individual teachers across all provinces and territories in Canada.

We wrote and developed 17 new lesson plans this year, growing our database of educational resources to more than **700**. New film-specific lesson plans were created, as well as themed lessons for elementary school classes observing National Indigenous History Month and Earth Day. Anti-racism lessons and resources to accompany the three RCtv livestream events were developed in English and French for various grade levels.

We also updated our Ontario Secondary Schools Literacy Test (OSSLT) preparation package to include an online computer-based practice test and launched a comprehensive redesign plan for an expanded and updated Canadian Film Unit.

RCTV LIVESTREAMS

The RCTv Livestream programme is an interactive, virtual series scheduled throughout the school year, with a final event taking place on National Canadian Film Day. For the past two years, RCTv has been dedicated to showcasing the works of Black and Indigenous artists, with a focus on anti-racism.

The 2021-22 RCTv Anti-Racism Livestream Series offered teachers a compelling way to use Canadian films in the classroom to cover urgent topics such as racism, xenophobia, and colonialism from a distinctly Canadian framework. Students had the opportunity to engage in conversation with their peers from across the country, and with filmmakers and other special guests.

In addition to the livestreams, the RCTv livestream programme included:

- Access to the Canadian films discussed in each of the three livestreams
- A list of Bonus Films for extended learning
- Lesson plans connecting the films and themes to the curriculum
- Resources to help teachers guide a discussion of sensitive content with students

This year's programme featured our first-ever dedicated French livestream for high school audiences and an Elementary-level Black History Month livestream for younger students/grades 5-8. On NCFD, we presented *RCTv: Celebrating Indigenous Stories*.

Over 48,000 students from every province and territory participated in these national conversations.

Our guests included filmmakers Danis Goulet (Cree/Metis) (NIGHT RAIDERS), Alicia K. Harris (PICK), and Kimberly Ann Surin (ENVERS ET CONTRE TOUT); star of NIGHT RAIDERS, Brooklyn Letexier-Hart (Cree/Metis); and hosts Garvia Bailey, Adrianna Chartrand (Michif/mixed settler), and Ronnie Dean Harris (Stō:lo/St'át'imc/Nlaka'pamux)



NATIONAL CANADIAN FILM DAY



National Canadian Film Day (CanFilmDay) has taken root as our largest annual celebration of Canadian culture. It is about giving Canadians an opportunity to gather together (in person or virtually) and celebrate the incredible achievements of our nation's filmmakers. Every year hundreds of screenings take place on every conceivable platform and in every conceivable venue.

The ninth annual CanFilmDay took place on April 20, 2022, when 2.5 million people tuned in to watch a great Canadian film on their favourite streaming or digital platform, and 65,000 individuals attended one of 1290 live events hosted by over 1000 community partners!

This year's spotlight, Celebrating Indigenous Voices, was incredibly successful, with nearly 70% of events showing Indigenous-made films. In addition, REEL CANADA hosted panels in Toronto featuring Tracey Deer (Mohawk) and Danis Goulet (Cree/Métis); and in Montreal featuring Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki) and Jeff Barnaby (Mi'kmaw) on the current moment in Indigenous filmmaking in Canada discussions.

Our full CanFilmDay 2022 report can be found [HERE](#).

REEL OPPORTUNITIES

REEL CANADA is dedicated to the growth and success of the Canadian film industry, and our Reel Opportunities Programme, launched in 2019, is an example of this dedication in action.

Through career workshops held in classrooms and youth spaces across the country, REEL CANADA is connecting youth with working industry professionals, so they can gain the insight, knowledge – and passion – for a career in the film and TV industry. This school year, Reel Opportunities career workshops engaged 6091 youth.

Through career workshops held in classrooms and youth spaces across the country, REEL CANADA is making widely available the knowledge and resources students need to take their first career steps in the film industry. During each virtual workshop, students hear firsthand from industry professionals and guests, who bring their passion and enthusiasm for the Canadian film industry to each session. This school year, Reel Opportunities career workshops have engaged 6091 youth.

We also created **72 part-time jobs/internships** for youth across Canada to gain work experience at film-based organizations, with hiring preference given to self-identifying BIPOC youth, youth with disabilities and other under-represented young people in film.

In May 2022, REEL CANADA piloted phase two of the Reel Opportunities workforce development programme: Reel Opportunities Popup Film Schools. In partnership with the National Screen Institute, we welcomed 20 aspiring film industry professionals of diverse backgrounds. We provided them with the opportunity to be trained in the logistics of filmmaking while experiencing different careers in the industry.

We're delighted that **87%** of Popup Film School participants noted an increased understanding of "best practices for professionals in the Canadian film industry," and **71%** felt *highly* prepared to pursue a career in the film and television industry following the training.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT

Filmmaker Highlight: Kimberley Ann Surin

Kimberley Ann Surin is a French-Canadian filmmaker of Haitian descent whose work focuses on uplifting the voices of Black, marginalized and under-represented talent, both on and off-screen.

Her short documentary about the racism experienced by Black children in hockey, *Envers et contre tout*, was one of the featured films during this year's French-Language Anti-Racism Livestream, where she also appeared as a special guest. There, she discussed the process of making her film, while exploring its themes and the impact it had on the student audience.

Kimberley Ann was also an outstanding guest for our Reel Opportunities workshop programme, connecting young people with professionals working in the film industry. She discussed the day-to-day of working as an emerging director and writer, and offered advice to participants curious about the ins and outs of filmmaking in Canada.

Kimberley Ann's new documentary, *The Relay*, about the groundbreaking Canadian athletes who brought home the gold from the Atlanta Olympics, was promoted as one of our programming recommendations to Lending Library users for Black History Month.



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT

Event highlight: Thug Screening and Q&A

Released in 2019 and based on a true story, Thug is a short film about an aspiring Black actor who risks his future for a part. Co-written by and starring REEL CANADA's RBC Emerging Artist Simon "Paul M" Mutabazi, the film explores the reality and consequences of racial stereotyping both inside and outside of the film industry.

In February, we screened Thug for a class of students at Prince of Wales Mini School in Vancouver, who were so engaged after watching the film through our Lending Library programme that their teacher reached out to us to see if we could organize an event with one of the filmmakers. REEL CANADA brought a virtual Q&A session with Simon directly into their classroom.



Through a series of insightful questions, the students led a conversation with Simon that explored the creative side of writing and filmmaking by discussing his artistic process, his inspirations, and the limitations of creating a short film, but they also delved into his experience working in an industry that often perpetuates racial stereotypes. Simon answered questions about racism within the film industry, and how he learned to identify it himself.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT

CanFilmDay Highlight: Celebrating Indigenous Voices panel discussion on CBC Gem

Presented in partnership with ImagineNATIVE, APTN and CBC Gem, our *Celebrating Indigenous Voices* panel provided an in-depth conversation with Danis Goulet (Cree/Métis) and Tracey Deer (Mohawk), two Indigenous directors at the top of their game.

Their latest films, *Night Raiders* and *Beans* respectively, have each been a massive success and serve as award-winning contributions to a growing and vibrant film community. Both films draw on the history of discrimination toward Indigenous people to deliver powerful messages of resilience.

Moderated by filmmaker and host Adam Garnet Jones (Cree/Métis), the conversation delved into the inspirations and aspirations of the two directors and the realities of Indigenous filmmaking. Among the themes discussed were the importance of representing Indigenous identity and Indigenous resistance on screen, the influence of the filmmaker's own communities and roots in their work, as well as a director's responsibility to foster a sense of community on a film set.

The panel is available for viewing on [CBC Gem](#).



PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT

Welcome to Canada Highlight: Anna Lambe presents The Grizzlies on CanFilmDay

Our annual event for new Canadians and English-language learners is always a highlight of National Canadian Film Day. Co-presented with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, this year we screened *The Grizzlies*, a film based on the inspiring true story of an Inuit youth lacrosse team that fights against the odds to qualify for a national competition. After the film, we were joined by one of the film's stars and one of REEL CANADA's RBC Emerging Artists, Anna Lambe (Inuk), for a Q&A moderated by CBC personality Ali Hassan.



Anna fielded questions about the importance of sport in Northern communities. Touching on the film's subject matter, Anna expressed the severity of the suicide crisis and the failure of the government to address systemic issues impacting youth mental health in Indigenous communities. She also had the chance to explore her own deep connection to the character and reflect on her journey to root herself in her community and culture.

The Q&A is available for viewing on [YouTube](#).

OUR TEAM

The REEL CANADA team is composed of 32 creative, witty, hard-working movie lovers from coast to coast, working together to bring their passion for Canadian film to the masses. In 2021-22, we were thrilled to bring on 7 new hires.

In the summer, you can find us glued to the screen during "Watch Party Wednesdays," enjoying a different Canadian film each week, and discussing it as a group.

Throughout the year, the REEL CANADA team watched more than **400** Canadian films at festivals and screenings across the country.

While we're still (mostly) working from home, we've put together several team-bonding activities, like staff-led presentations on our astrological signs, get-to-know-you powerpoints, and some highly competitive game nights!



THANK YOU

to the generous sponsors and partners who
made this year's programming possible.

SPONSORS AND PARTNERS



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