



**ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL**

**2023
ANNUAL REPORT**

June 12, 2024

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

We are happy to record in the books another great year for the Atlantic International Film Festival. With another year passing and the challenges posed by COVID further in the rearview mirror, the team at AIFF has been able to re-focus on the core goals of the organization. An updated strategic plan, a refreshed brand, an audit of our audience were just some of the tasks AIFF successfully undertook during 2023 with the goal of continuing to be a pillar of support in the rapidly-changing film and television industry.

Thank you to our Executive Director, Martha Cooley, and the rest of the AIFF team for putting on such a great show (or, should I say, several shows), seamlessly adapting to all the usual challenges that go along with a week-long celebration, along with the unusual ones (e.g. hurricanes!). AIFF's goal of raising the bar on quality of content was seemingly achieved based on audience feedback, and connections were strengthened between many in the local industry with others across the world, most notably in New Zealand, the region on which the festival highlighted as its focus for 2023.

Of course AIFF is more than just a week-long film and television event. With its alternative programming, such as AIFF Partners, AIFF Kids and the AIFF Kids Film Competition provided opportunities for filmmakers, aspiring filmmakers and audiences alike the opportunity to connect throughout the year, and we are always searching for ways in which to expand our reach beyond our "main event" in September.



Despite the constantly evolving industry landscape, AIFF's ultimate objective is to celebrate and elevate the work of Atlantic Canadian filmmakers, and allow them the opportunity to connect with audiences and fellow collaborators, both locally and beyond. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, we thank all of our supporters, sponsors, audience members and other partners who helped us with that purpose over the past year.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing everyone again during 2024.

Marc Reardon
AIFF Chair of the Board

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The 43rd Atlantic International Film Festival was a vibrant event full of screenings, parties, panels and more. With new staff in key leadership roles, 2023 was an important year to refocus on our mandate and bring back a full slate of public and industry offerings.

Most significantly, this year marked the launch of our new branding, complete with a new logo and design treatment by our long-time Creative Director, Eric Miller. We returned to our legacy name, Atlantic International Film Festival and the acronym "AIFF" to proudly say who we are, what we do and where we are located. This rebrand puts us in line with film festivals around the world and was very positively received by audiences and community members.

A revamped programming team, led by our new Director of Programming, Lisa Haller, welcomed four new members, bringing their unique perspectives and backgrounds to our film curation. We also put in place a pre-screening committee to provide pathways into the programming world, and engage more of our community. And finally under Lisa's direction we refreshed our programming categories for the festival to better communicate our offerings to audiences.

Our new head of Industry Programming, Chrissy King led the inaugural year of our AIFF Filmmaker Lab, (a replacement for our former Script Development Program), and AIFF Partners engaged in the first year of a two year spotlight on New Zealand with our partners from the NZ Film Commission.

Several other behind-the-scenes operational projects occupied us this year including the creation of a new Strategic Plan to guide our



next five years, and an Audience Development survey project to better understand our current and potential audience.

All in all it was a busy year, supported by the hard work of our full-time and contact staff and an engaged Board of Directors. Thank you to everyone who participated in the festival and our events this year and we look forward to another vibrant year of screenings and events in 2024!

Martha Cooley
Executive Director

THE TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marc Reardon

Chair

Sanjeev Pushkarna

Vice-Chair

Christena McIsaac

Secretary

Brad Olsen

Treasurer

OFFICERS

Liz Rigney

Meghan Ory

Kellie Manning

Shawna Hughes

Ann Bernier

STAFF

Martha Cooley

Executive Director

Lisa Haller

Director of Programming

Chrissy King-Lopes

Industry Manager

Craig Cameron

Operations Manager

Marcin Modzynski

Marketing & Communications
Manager

Nadine D'entremont

Volunteer & External Relations
Manager

Matt McIntyre

Partnership Manager

PROGRAMMING TEAM

Evan Bower

Senior Programming
Coordinator

Seán Maheux Galway

Programmer

Kevin Chabot

Programmer

Sandi Rankaduwa

Programmer

Fallen Matthews

Programmer

Jessica Gyll

Programming Associate
(Documentary)

PRESCREENER COMMITTEE

Evelyn C. White

Emily McMahon

Sunita Miya Muganz

Induk Lee

Paul Rossiter

OTHER CONTRACT STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Jordan Beuckx

Box Office Manager

Ryan Blair

IT Manager

Danielle Browne

Programming Assistant

Don Brownrigg

Special Events Manager

Jacob Caven

Partnership Coordinator

Nina Cherry

VIP Talent Coordinator

Chris Geworsky

Head Photographer

James Gregor

Industry Coordinator

Esther Kayode

AIFF Partners Coordinator

Dusty Keleher

Projectionist

Patrick Laba

Marketing & Communications
Coordinator

Susanne Leblanc

Theater Manager

Jasper Lennox

Hospitality

Rhett MacIennan

Box Office Coordinator

Pat Martin

Technical Director

Eric Miller

Creative Director

Wendy Phillips

Publicist

Ruth Rementeria

Volunteer Coordinator

Brayden Swain

Hospitality Coordinator

Nancy Urich

Bookkeeper

Aaron Webster

Industry Assistant

Lawrence Willett

Operations Coordinator

Nathan Wisnicki

Print Traffic Coordinator

Shayna Young

Senior Marketing &
Communications Coordinator



ATLANTIC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

The 43rd Atlantic International Film Festival took place from September 14 to 21, 2023, at Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane in downtown Halifax. Our Opening Night set the stage for a successful event, with a sold-out screening of writer/director Fawzia Mirza's first feature, *THE QUEEN OF MY DREAMS*, produced by two Nova Scotian producers, Marc Tetreault and Jason Levangie of Shut Up & Colour Pictures.

On the third day of the festival, Saturday, September 16, Hurricane Lee made landfall in Nova Scotia as a tropical storm, resulting in power outages that forced us to cancel all the day's screenings and events. The festival team was able to shift and readjust to a condensed schedule of screenings when

the power returned on Sunday, while also addressing delayed and altered travel plans for festival guests.

The final five days of AIFF saw full screenings, engaging Q&As and vibrant receptions and gatherings. The festival ended on a high note with a community event at NSCAD's Art Bar celebrating the AIFF and Linda Joy Awards and a Closing Night Gala Party.

In all, we welcomed close to 80 filmmaker guests, who introduced their films and engaged in thoughtful Q&As with the audience. Guest highlights included Atom Egoyan (*SEVEN VEILS*) and Aeschylus Poulos (*MR. DRESSUP: THE MAGIC OF MAKE-BELIEVE*).

2023 PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

16,882

total attendance for all film screenings, panels, receptions and events

OVER 80

film guests in attendance

10,745

film tickets ordered (in-cinema and virtual)

55%

of program by female-identifying filmmakers (39 short films, 27 feature films)

118 FILMS

59 feature films, 8 short film programmes

38

countries represented in our programming

89

in-cinema screening opportunities scheduled

30%

of overall program dedicated to Atlantic Canada Representation

Programming Team

In an effort to include more transparency around the programming process and more diversity in decision-making roles, in 2023 we expanded our programming team. We welcomed six pre-screener volunteers who undertook viewing unsolicited submissions and four new contract programmers who considered and curated sections together, under the guidance of the Director of Programming.

2023 PROGRAMMERS

Kevin Chabot

Seán Maheux Galway

Fallen Matthews

Sandi Rankaduwa



Programming Streams

Selected from over 1,000 submissions, the 2023 line-up included 118 exemplary films curated into 8 newly defined program categories:

Galas showcase highly anticipated titles

World Cinema is a selection of narrative features that highlights international festival favourites, renown auteurs, and bold filmmaking perspectives

Documentary highlights captivating non-fiction

Narrative New Waves offers a spotlight on first features from emerging filmmakers to watch

Late Night Visions is for weird, wild and boundary-pushing work for genre fans

Classics/Restored selects classics ready to be (re)discovered on the big screen; In Focus is a retrospective of a filmmaker or icon

Short Films are the best and brightest in short-form storytelling

Other 2023 Programming

- Screening of the child-friendly film, *Butterfly Tale*, paired with free face painting, to engage families
- Second (encore) screenings for 20 feature films in the selection
- 5 free day-time screenings from our In Focus and Classics/Restored sections
- AIFF Online provided access to Atlantic Canadian films virtually throughout Atlantic Canada

Atlantic Awards

Atlantic Award winners were selected by jury members **Liane Cunje**, **Ashley McKenzie** and **Kiel McNaughton**. The annual Linda Joy and AIFF Awards Ceremony is co-presented by AFSCOOP, and took place on Thursday, September 21 at NSCAD Art Bar.

BEST ATLANTIC EDITOR

Sponsored by the Canadian Cinema Editors

Winner: Justin Oakey

THE KING TIDE

DAVID RENTON AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Sponsored by Sky Talent

Winner: Susan Kent

WHO'S YER FATHER?

JOAN ORENSTEIN AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Sponsored by Sky Talent

Winner: Briar Ainslie

MOTHER'S SKIN

BEST ATLANTIC ORIGINAL SCORE

Winner: Devon Ross

EVELYN

BEST ATLANTIC CINEMATOGRAPHER

Winner: Desmond Simon

MITATA – GRANDFATHER

MICHAEL WEIR AWARD FOR BEST ATLANTIC SCREENWRITER

Winner: Christian Sparkes

SWEETLAND

BEST ATLANTIC SHORT DOCUMENTARY

Sponsored by 902 Post and DOC Atlantic

Winner: SONGS OF UNAMA'KI

Directors: Dawn Wells and Jeff Miller

Producers: Donna Davies, Ann Bernier and Victoria Germain

BEST ATLANTIC SHORT

Sponsored by 902 Post

Winner: **MOTHER'S SKIN**

Director: Leah Johnston

Producers: Jason Buxton, Leah Johnston

HONOURABLE MENTION FOR BEST ATLANTIC SHORT

For Achievement in Experimental Filmmaking

Winner: FATHER ARCHIE

Director: Todd Fraser

BEST ATLANTIC DOCUMENTARY

Sponsored by the Directors Guild of Canada and DOC Atlantic

Winner: CELESTIAL QUEER: THE LIFE WORK AND WONDER OF JAMES MACSWAIN

Directors: Eryn Foster, Sue Johnson

BEST ATLANTIC DIRECTOR

Sponsored by William F. White International

Winner: Christian Sparkes

SWEETLAND

GORDON PARSONS AWARD FOR BEST ATLANTIC FEATURE

Winner: THE KING TIDE

Director: Christian Sparkes

Producers: Allison White, Will Woods

INDUSTRY





AIFF PARTNERS

In 2023, our co-production/co-financing market, AIFF Partners, continued to focus on dramatic feature film, television and digital fiction series and completed the first year of a two-year spotlight on New Zealand.

To ensure access to co-production opportunities from new content markets, AIFF Partners undertakes a spotlight on a different region every two years, and in 2023 we successfully executed the first year of a spotlight on New Zealand in partnership with the New Zealand Film Commission. The New Zealand Film Commission brought a delegation of 17 producers from their region

to AIFF Partners. They also hosted a cocktail networking hour, facilitated participants for two panels during the conference, and provided a jury member for the AIFF Atlantic Awards.

Despite the loss of power at the Lord Nelson on our second market day due to the hurricane, AIFF Partners proceeded, with meetings held by candlelight. We were able to hold our final panel, serve meals, and even still host the Lobster Dinner by the (stormy) Sea with a packed house and unforgettable scenery.

2023 PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

120

senior-level film and television producers & executives

1K+

pre-scheduled meetings between delegates

33

(scripted) TV projects & 37 film projects

34

buzz sessions (roundtables) hosted by 17 companies

32

international delegates

3

panel presentations

88

Canadian

17

delegates from our spotlight region: New Zealand

8

film commissions, 10 distributors, 5 financiers and 6 sales agents & 4 broadcasters

8

emerging producers from Atlantic Canada

“

Partners is my favorite industry forum to establish real connections with both Canadian and international collaborators and decision makers

Jane Loughman

Monkeys & Parrots

I am so excited to tell you about a success story we had at Partners. It was over a casual breakfast meeting where we connected a Producer and a Broadcaster with us handling Distribution and now it is something we are really proud and excited about - thank you for everything you do at AIFF partners!

Matt Orenstien

Vortex Media

What a wonderful experience the festival was this year. Don't get me wrong, I had an amazing time the year before, but I really felt a big difference this year. The audiences and strength of programming was world class, the Partners market excellent - it was so well done

Aeschylus Poulos

Hawk Eye Pictures



AIFF Partners Panels

A FIRESIDE CHAT ON CO-PRODUCTION WITH NEW ZEALAND

Moderated by Jasmin McSweeney of the New Zealand Film Commission with panelists: Emma Slade, Paul Barkin, Jane Loughman and Daniel Beckerman, this panel was a classic Partners offering with veterans sharing “the good, the bad and the ugly” of their experience in co-productions, specifically with our spotlight region; New Zealand.

TELLING INDIGENOUS STORIES

An ambitious and important endeavor where we were proud to facilitate the presence of Indigenous filmmakers from across Canada,

as well as including Indigenous filmmakers from New Zealand. The panel was co-moderated by: Adam Garnett Jones (APTN) & Te O Kahurangi (NZFC) and panelists included: local filmmaker Bretten Hannam, Kerry Surigmya (Indigenous Screen Office), Kerry Warkia, and Tania Goucher.

AI & OUR INDUSTRY

Moderated by the former president of Halifax Innovation Miriam Zitner, featured local AI expert Jennifer La Plante and included industry academic from the New York Film Academy Tony Schwartz, as well as seasoned Canadian producer Michael Peterson.

Projects that benefited from attending AIFF Partners 2023 boast a projected total Canadian spend of more than \$200 million by 2025.



AIFF FILMMAKER LAB

The inaugural AIFF Filmmaker Lab was designed to welcome emerging filmmakers to the world of festivals and film distribution, with the goal of preparing them to advance their artistic journeys and helping them develop release plans for their short films. With a focus on diversifying the sector, the program held 50% of the seats for those who self-identified as QTBIPOC, deaf, disabled/differently abled, neurodiverse or coming from another equity-deserving community.

Filmmakers were selected based on an application process which required them to submit a letter of intent and a recently completed short film. The program accepted 10 participants representing all four provinces (PEI, NS, NL, NB).

Participants attended workshops on festival strategy, festival programming and DIY publicity. They also took part in one-to-one meetings with a Festival Strategist to develop a tailored festival release plan for their recently completed short film. During the

festival, participants attended industry panels on Indigenous storytelling and AI's impact on the industry, as part of the AIFF Partners co-production market. They also attended public panels on current issues in Atlantic Canadian filmmaking, a networking lunch for filmmakers, and AIFF screenings and receptions.

2023 PARTICIPANTS

Daniel Brown (PEI)
Kate Devlin (NS)
Veronica Dymond (NL)
Man Long "Norman" Ho (PEI)
Nicola Hawkins (NL)
Barrett Hooper (NS)
Madison Hughes (NB)
Chelsea Innes (NS)
Paul Rossiter (NS)
Akshay Shirke (NS)



PUBLIC PANELS

In conjunction with the Filmmaker Lab but also open to the public, we hosted four panels related to changing trends in the film and television industry. Indigenous filmmaker Stephanie Joline hosted three of the four panels and local documentary filmmaker Walter Forsyth hosted the final panel. Panels were 1-hour long, with time at the end for Q & A from the audience, and were recorded for broadcast on YouTube after the event. Topics included:

WRITING FOR FILM IN A TV WORLD

This panel featured Prince Edward Island comedic talent Heidi Brander (*This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, *Baroness Von Sketch Show*, *Son of a Critch*) in conversation with Julia Lederer (*With Love and a Major Organ*).

CASTING OUTSIDE THE BOX

We closed the series with a conversation on casting with veteran casting director Ciel Crosby, independent filmmaker Heather Young, and emerging filmmaker Induk Lee. They discussed Heather's unorthodox casting methods, the pros and cons of new and old methods, gender neutral roles, zoom auditions, and managing expectations of both directors and actors.

DOCS THAT MATTER

Filmmaker and Lunenburg Doc Fest programmer Walter Forsyth moderated a panel on documentary film featuring Megan Wennberg, Nance Ackerman and Dawn Wells (all with films in the festival) discussing their craft and the greater ecological and societal impact documentary film has on the world.

GOOD VIBES ONLY

A group of well-known local talents, including Tara Thorne, Koumbie and Liise Keeling discussed the role of an "intimacy coordinator" and the topic of keeping folks safe and comfortable on set.

REEL EAST COAST

AIFF partners with the CBC annually to produce REEL EAST COAST (REC), a showcase of some of the best Atlantic Canadian short films that have screened at the Atlantic International Film Festival. The series' ninth season was hosted by Atlantic Canadian actor and radio host Jeff Douglas (CBC Mainstreet), running on CBC television in the Atlantic Region in January 2024. Viewers were also able to see REEL EAST COAST online through CBC Gem.



REEL EAST COAST FILMS FROM 2023/2024

MISS CAMPBELL: INUK TEACHER

DIRECTOR: Heather Campbell

MICKEY

DIRECTOR: Stevey Hunter

HUM

DIRECTOR: Rebecca Tremblay

ESCAPE THE USUAL

DIRECTOR: Colby Conrad

HEBRON RELOCATION

DIRECTOR: Holly Andersen

WOLF

DIRECTOR: Kathleen Dorian

BHA LAD LÀN SGEULACHDAN

DIRECTOR: Todd Fraser

STARRY-EYED

DIRECTOR: Emma MacCabe

EUA-LANDER

DIRECTOR: Erica Meus-Saunders

CITY COOP

DIRECTOR: Claire Fraser

THE HEALING JAR

DIRECTOR: Andrea Cass

ENTRÉE

DIRECTOR: Akshay Shirke

MOTHER'S SKIN

DIRECTOR: Leah Johnston

THE GAZE

DIRECTOR: Stacy Gardner

KEEPER

DIRECTOR: Tori Martin Fleming

SLAY

DIRECTOR: Kevin Hartford

THE YEAR LONG BOULDER

DIRECTOR: Brielle LeBlanc

SPECIAL PROJECTS



STRATEGIC PLAN

In early 2023, the festival embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process to assess the current post-pandemic state of the organization and to set the vision and priorities for the next five years. The theme of the strategy is one of rebuilding. AIFF, like many arts organizations, was significantly affected by the global pandemic. Audience numbers (and box office revenue) declined

by 50% between 2019 and 2022. With smaller audiences and fewer in-person events, sponsorship revenue also declined by roughly 50%. A combination of reduced costs (due to lack of events) and government COVID-19 relief funding helped sustain the festival during this challenging time.

As part of the planning process, we revisited our purpose and vision.

NEW PURPOSE STATEMENT

AIFF's purpose is to celebrate, elevate and advance the work of Atlantic Canadian filmmakers alongside a curated selection of films from around the globe, inspiring audiences with films that reflect a diversity of voices and perspectives.

AIFF fulfills its purpose in three ways:

- **Celebrating and Inspiring** – By celebrating Atlantic Canadian work and inspiring audiences with films from around the world. This is primarily done via the festival.
- **Connecting and Launching** – By helping filmmakers find production partners and generate global audiences. This is primarily illustrated via FIN Partners, which brings global funders and collaborators to Halifax; networking at the festival; and professional development panels/workshops.
- **Identifying and Elevating** – By nurturing filmmakers and identifying new and diverse voices. This is primarily accomplished by spotlighting rising stars in Atlantic Canada; through discovery programming and mentorship programs (with a diversity focus); emerging filmmaker presentations; and AIFF Kids, which nurtures a younger generation of creators and audiences.

AIFF is committed to becoming an accessible, inclusive, anti-racist organization and will audit the current state of the organization and apply best practices throughout (content, filmmakers, staff, board and audience).

AIFF's vision is to rebuild a vibrant, inclusive, sustainable festival with galas and premieres; renewed collaborations with industry partners; engaged sponsors; and year-round programming.

The pandemic disrupted the entertainment sector and arts organizations such as AIFF. The limits placed on in-person gatherings had an impact on attendance and sponsorship. As the organization looks to the future, its three goals are to:

- Rebuild sponsorship and explore new sources of funding
- Rebuild audience
- Rebuild value for industry stakeholders



AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

In order to better understand AIFF's audience and to grow participation in our offerings, in 2023, we engaged Nordicity* to conduct a strategically designed research project. This project included an online audit, a high-level environmental scan, and a public (audience) survey.

The specific goals of Nordicity's research were to provide insight into AIFF's current audiences' habits and motivations, as well as

their potential audience (including barriers to accessing the festival and what might motivate people to attend).

The intent of the AIFF Audience Survey was to capture insights related to AIFF's audiences, particularly in terms of attendee demographics, motivations, behaviours, and desires. A total of 402 complete survey responses were received.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC FINDINGS

Audience Demographics: Age

- The age bracket most represented in AIFF's audience is 65 and above (20%), followed by 25 – 29 (12%) and 40 - 44 (12%).
- The age brackets least represented in AIFF's audience is 45-49 (3%), 50-54 (7%), and 30-34 (6%).

Audience Demographics: Racial Identify

- The vast majority (88%) of AIFF attendees identify as White, of European descent.
- A combined 12% self-identified as a person of colour.
- Of those respondents, the group most represented was First Nations, Inuit, or Metis (20%). The groups second-most represented were East Asian (17%) and Middle Eastern/ North African (18%).
- The groups least represented were South Asian (5%) and Pacific Islanders (0%).
- The diversity of AIFF's audience is nearly consistent with the province's official demographics.

Audience Demographics: Persons with Disabilities

- 12% of respondents self-identified as having a disability, which is lower than official provincial statistics.
- The province has a higher percentage of disabled citizens than the national average: 30% of Nova Scotians 15 years and older have at least one disability.

Audience Demographics: 2SLGBTQIA+

- 26% of AIFF's audience self-identified as a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, which is a higher proportion than national population statistics.
- According to national census data, 4% of the Canadian population are members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Based on its audience insights project, Nordicity identified seven key areas for action:

- **Social media:** Leverage social media strategically to grow audiences
- **Cross-platform strategies:** Take advantage of cross-platform opportunities to reach audiences
- **New attendees:** Develop tactics to connect with untapped audiences

- **Hybrid festival:** Continue to invest in an online complement to in-person events
- **Celebratory feel:** Play up the festival atmosphere
- **Industry support:** Capitalize on strong Industry attendance
- **Cultural connections:** Explore cross-promotion with other arts organizations

** Nordicity is a leading international consulting firm with expertise in the arts and culture and heritage sectors.*



REBRAND

2023 was a big year of change for the organization's brand, an evolution of our identity that took the best parts of the more recent FIN brand strategy while returning to our roots and legacy name of AIFF.

The FIN rebrand of 2017 unified all our programs under one umbrella brand, but opinions on the brand were mixed. Perhaps most importantly, the brand and name still had to be explained regularly even seven years later, as it was never very clear how it was supposed to work and what it actually meant or stood for.

With all that in mind, it was decided that the brand needed a refresh. Recognizing that Atlantic International Film Festival was an established name with a decades-long legacy, in use for over 30 years (previously as the Atlantic Film Festival), and that many still referred to it as such, it was a natural direction to go in and return to.

We dropped the FIN altogether, replacing it with AIFF as our shortened name, acronym, and the identifier in our other programs such as AIFF Partners, AIFF Kids, and so on. The Northern Creative team, led by our de facto Creative Director Eric Miller, created the new branding. They came up with a strong brand with a bright and clean new logo featuring "aiff", and a comprehensive set of brand standards, guidelines, etc.

We launched the new brand in the summer of 2023 to overall positive reactions and responses from the public, media and various related industries. The general opinion seems to be that the new branding and logo, and return to the former traditional name of Atlantic International Film Festival, is clear, crisp, engaging and easy to understand.



MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

CREATIVE DESIGN

This year's theme and campaign was Love Film. With our rebrand embracing our roots, simplifying our name and clearly indicating who we are and what we do, our message this year followed suit. AIFF exists because of the love of film, from the people who make them to the people who watch them, and everyone in between who has ever loved a movie. This also made for a clean and simple hashtag of #LoveFilm.

Our main images for the campaign were sourced from a call for photos from film productions to use as backgrounds, as well as audience images from the festival. Eric Miller created the 2023 design and main images, and Northern Creative also produced a 15-second PSA utilizing similar visual elements and featuring people doing various film industry jobs as well as audiences in movie theatres.



Highlights

MARKETING COLLATERAL

- 42 theater posters
- 400 11x17 posters
- 17 branded pop-up banners
- 2 branded photo backdrops
- 100 rack cards
- 2000 Program Guides
- 4000 Schedules
- 19 street pole banners (Spring Garden)

ADVERTISING

CTV
 Global
 Saltwire
 The Coast
 Relish
 Pattison
 Canadian Academy
 Wayves
 MBS Radio
 Tourism Nova Scotia
 Discover Halifax
 Halifax Events
 Facebook
 Instagram
 YouTube

DIGITAL

Website: 27,000 page views; 18,000 visitors; 11,000 unique visitors
Instagram: 198,900 impressions
Twitter: 150,400 impressions
Facebook: 95,800 reach

MEDIA COVERAGE

All Nova Scotia
 Broadcast Dialogue
 Canada Gazette
 CBC
 CBC Radio
 CTV News Atlantic
 CTV Morning Live
 Global News
 Halifax Bloggers
 Halifax City News
 Halifax Presents
 Mirage News
 Newfoundland News
 Saltwire
 The Coast
 University Affairs
 VOCM News

COMMUNITY



VOLUNTEERS

With only seven full-time employees, AIFF relies on extra help to put on an eight-day festival filled with a range of events. Some of that extra help comes from contract employees—but a lot of help comes from a dedicated group of volunteers.

Our volunteers come from a broad range of demographics and sociographics: they include professionals, retirees, students, recent immigrants, employees from festival sponsor organizations, film industry crew members, and more. They give their time and talents to the festival for the tangible benefit of free movie tickets—but also for intangible benefits like community and camaraderie. For some groups of volunteers, like post-secondary students and newcomers to Canada, volunteering also provides resume-building experience. In 2023, our recruiting campaign was very successful, and we increased our volunteer pool by 113 people over the course of the summer.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AREAS

- **Theatre Front of House:** front of house crew, theatre manager, greeter
- **AIFF Partners:** command centre, registration, front of house
- **Transportation:** driver, airport greeter
- **Special Events:** front of house
- **Marketing:** social media, photography

Over the course of the eight days of the Atlantic International Film Festival, volunteers contributed 1443 hours to our events.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION SESSIONS

In all, we held 20 volunteer information sessions in 2023 for both new and returning volunteers, including:

- 12 general online sessions (open to anyone)
- 1 general online session (Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia)
- 1 transportation volunteer online sessions
- 2 general in-person sessions



NS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION PARTNER SCREENING

AIFF launched a new partnership with the NS Human Rights Commission to present free screenings of films from AIFF and hold online panel conversations about resonate themes from the films. *Dawn, Her Dad & the Tractor* was available to stream for free via AIFF Online from December 1-10 as part of Nova Scotia Human Right Week, followed by a free online Panel Discussion on Thursday, December 7. The

panel included filmmakers Shelley Thompson (*Dawn, Her Dad & the Tractor*), Brody Weaver (*Youth Project*), and Marley O'Brien (*Artist*), in a discussion about how transgender representation in film can help to advance understanding and offer an opportunity to unpack assumptions and misconceptions.

PARTNERSHIPS

An essential part of the festival's ecosystem, the Partnership department (sometimes called 'Partnerships and Sponsorships') is the department tasked with connecting the festival with businesses, organizations, government agencies, and vendors to create meaningful and profitable activations. From in-kind partnerships based on mutual benefit, to simple ad-buy, to large-scale event partnership and funding, Partnerships are an important contributor to the festival's continued growth and prosperity.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR 2023:

New Zealand Film Commission
MUBI
Telus Fund
Dandurand Group/Villa Maria Wines
Barkeep Cocktails

PUBLIC FUNDERS

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
Canada Council for the Arts
Halifax Regional Municipality
Nova Scotia Communities, Culture,
Tourism & Heritage
Telefilm Canada

PARTNERS

902 Post
Academy of Cinema and Television
ACTRA Maritimes
Advocate
AFSCOOP
Alliance Française
Atlantic Lottery
Barkeep Cocktails
BeechWood Productions
Bell Fund
Black Screen Office
Canadian Cinema Editors
Canada Media Fund
Canadian Media Producers Association
CBC
Cineplex
CTV
Dandurand Group

Directors Guild of Canada
DOC Atlantic
DSM Telecom
Ecojustice
Encore
French Consulate
Geworsky Motion + Stills
Global News
Halifax Partnership
Halifax Stanfield International Airport
Happy Ghost
IATSE 849
Innovation PEI
Independent Production Fund
J&W Murphy Foundation
Lord Nelson Hotel
Move 100
MUBI
New Zealand Film Commission
NFB
Nova Scotia Business Inc (NSBI)
Nova Scotia Department of Education
and Early Childhood Development
Ontario Creates
Pattison Outdoor Advertising
Picture Newfoundland
Phillips PR
Purple Cow Internet
RBC
Relish Media
SaltWire
Screen Nova Scotia
SimplyCast
Side Door
Sky Talent Group Ltd.
Star Power
Stewart McKelvey
Telus Fund
The Workshop Creative Studio
The Northern
TIANS
Universal Realty Group
Untapped Marketing
Village Sound
Warner Brothers Discovery Access Canada
WIFT-AT
William F. White International Inc.



ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

In 2023 AIFF engaged in several significant projects to update our key guiding documents for the organization, set new benchmarks and approaches for audience engagement and reconnect with our mandate and mission.

Our new Strategic Plan, developed in the winter of 2023, will provide a vital roadmap for the next five years. As part of the plan, our commitment to becoming an accessible, inclusive, anti-racist organization had significant impacts on our operations this year and will continue to guide our priorities going forward.

Our Audience Development survey, conducted in the spring, offers vital and timely information about our current audience and who we are not reaching. The results of this project will allow us to tailor our marketing efforts going forward.

And finally, our rebrand, launched in the summer, gave us a fresh new logo and design

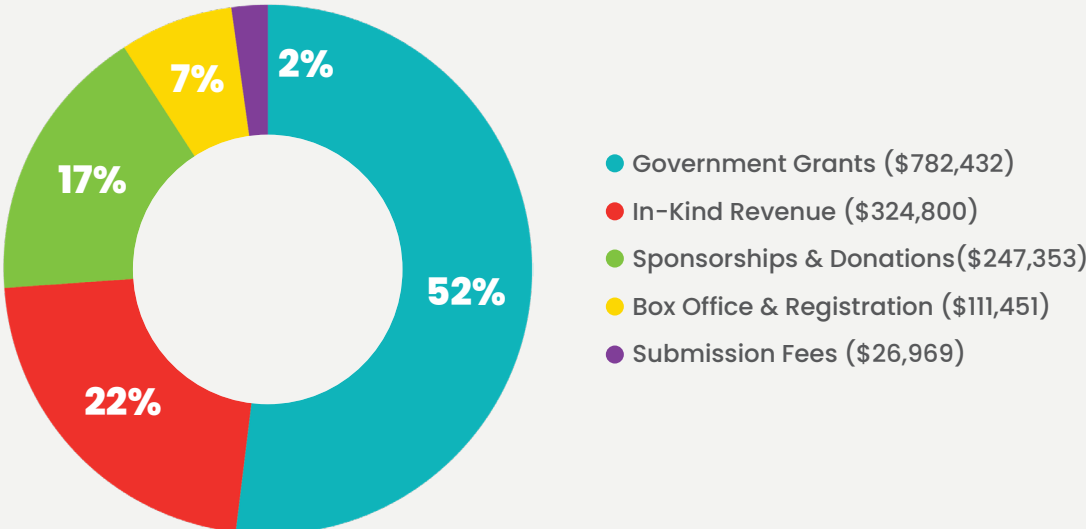
elements to connect with our audience and key stakeholders.

Financially, 2023 was another rebuilding year for AIFF. While we had some success bringing on board new corporate partners and expanding existing relationships, revenue generation continues to be a priority for the festival. Overall, the festival ran a deficit again this year in order to present all our regular activities. Similar to 2022, this deficit was offset by several years of accumulated surplus from government wage subsidies and other federal and provincial programs related to COVID-19 rebuilding.

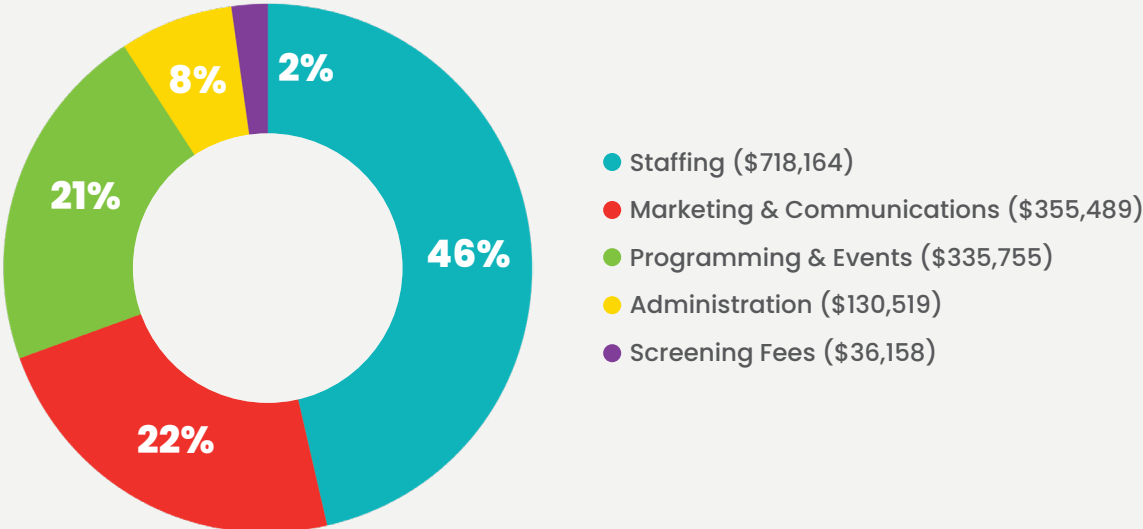
The festival is still in a process of right-sizing our administration and our activities to our new financial reality, with a goal of stabilizing our operations and our finances in 2024 in order to create a foundation from which to build back our public offerings.

2023 AUDIT SUMMARY

REVENUE



EXPENSES





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