

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Twelve National Film Board of Canada documentaries featured at the 2019 FIN Atlantic International Film Festival
Five world premieres from Atlantic filmmakers, plus gala screenings



(Image provided by the NFB)

August 14, 2019 – Montreal – National Film Board of Canada

With premieres and gala presentations, the 2019 [FIN Atlantic International Film Festival](#) will showcase the talents of visionary documentary filmmakers from across Atlantic Canada and the country, September 12–19.

The 2019 edition of FIN is featuring five world premieres by [NFB](#) filmmakers, including Newfoundland filmmaker [Ellie Yonova's](#) feature-length *[Luben and Elena: The Love of Art and the Art of Love](#)*.

There are also world premieres of short docs by Halifax filmmakers: [Sandi Rankaduwa's](#) *[Ice Breakers](#)*, [Colin MacKenzie](#) and [Aparna Kapur's](#) *[Balakrishna](#)*, [Jason Young's](#) *[Gun Killers](#)*, and [Rachel Bower's](#) *[I Am Skylar](#)*.

Works by some of the best-known names in Atlantic filmmaking will be featured in the festival's gala and documentary program categories, with *[Assholes: A Theory](#)* by distinguished Halifax director [John Walker](#); *[Conviction](#)* ([Sea to Sea Productions](#)/NFB in association with [CBC Documentary Channel](#)) by [Nance Ackerman](#), [Ariella Pahlke](#) and [Teresa MacInnes](#); *[Standing on the Line \(Franchir la ligne\)](#)* by Nova Scotian-born Acadian filmmaker [Paul Émile d'Entremont](#); as well as screenwriter [Mary Walsh](#) and director [Deanne Foley's](#) St. John's-produced short *[Radical](#)*.

FIN is also presenting the much-anticipated premieres of feature docs by two multi-award-winning Indigenous filmmakers: the Atlantic premiere of *[Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger](#)*, the 53rd film by [Alanis Obomsawin](#), and the Halifax debut of [Tasha Hubbard's](#) *[nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up](#)* ([Downstream Documentary Productions](#)/NFB in association with [CBC DOCS](#) and [APTN](#)), which has been playing to packed houses across the country as part of an NFB national tour. FIN will also host the Atlantic premiere of Vancouver filmmaker [Baljit Sangra's](#) *[Because We Are Girls](#)*—a powerful tribute to women's strength in the face of profound trauma.

Gala Presentations

Assholes: A Theory (81 min.)

Friday, September 13, 6:30 p.m.

Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 8

With venomous social media, resurgent authoritarianism and rampant narcissism threatening to trash civilization as we know it, the time has come for John Walker's ***Assholes: A Theory***—an entertaining and oh-so-timely feature doc. Inspired by Aaron James' *New York Times* bestseller of the same name, ***Assholes: A Theory*** investigates the breeding grounds of contemporary "asshole culture"—and locates signs of civility in an otherwise rude-'n-nasty universe.

Honoured with a Focus On retrospective at the 2018 Hot Docs film festival, Walker is one of Nova Scotia's most distinguished filmmakers. ***Assholes: A Theory*** is produced by John Walker and Ann Bernier for [John Walker Productions Ltd.](#) and by Annette Clarke for the NFB's Quebec and Atlantic Studio in Halifax.

Conviction (78 min.)

Monday, September 16, 6:30 p.m.

Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 8

Nance Ackerman, Ariella Pahlke and Teresa MacInnes' ***Conviction*** envisions alternatives to prison through the eyes of women behind bars and those fighting on the front lines of the decarceration movement. Not another 'broken prison' film, this collaboration is a 'broken society' film—an ambitious and inspired re-build of our community, from the inside out. The film compels viewers to examine why we imprison the most vulnerable among us, and at what cost.

Conviction is the fourth NFB directorial credit for Ackerman, whose 2006 film [Cottonland](#) received the Rex Tasker Award for Best Documentary at the FIN Atlantic International Film Festival. Pahlke is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and media artist with extensive experience facilitating collaborative projects. MacInnes has directed more than 10 films with the NFB over her acclaimed career, including the 2015 NFB documentary [Buying Sex](#), named one of the top ten feminist films streaming on US Netflix by *Ms. Magazine*. ***Conviction*** is produced by Teresa MacInnes for Sea to Sea Productions and produced and executive produced by Annette Clarke for the NFB's Quebec and Atlantic Studio in Halifax.

Documentary Program

nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up (98 min.)

Saturday, September 14, 11:30 a.m.

Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 5

On August 9, 2016, a young Cree man named Colten Boushie died from a gunshot to the back of his head after entering Gerald Stanley's rural property with his friends. The jury's subsequent acquittal of Stanley captured international attention, raising questions about racism embedded within Canada's legal system and propelling Colten's family to national and international stages in their pursuit of justice.

Named Best Canadian Feature at Hot Docs in Toronto and winner of the Colin Low Award for Canadian Documentary at Vancouver's DOXA, Tasha Hubbard's ***nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*** weaves a profound narrative encompassing the filmmaker's own adoption, the stark history of colonialism on the Prairies, and a transformative vision of a future where Indigenous children can live safely on their homelands.

The latest film from the acclaimed director of [Two Worlds Colliding](#) and [Birth of a Family](#), ***nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up*** is produced by Tasha Hubbard and George Hupka for Downstream Documentary Productions, and Jon Montes and Bonnie Thompson for the NFB. The executive producers are David Christensen (NFB), Janice Dawe and Kathy Avrich-Johnson ([Bizable Media](#)).

Standing on the Line (Franchir la ligne) (80 min.)

Saturday, September 14, 1:30 p.m.

Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 1

In both amateur and professional sports, being gay remains taboo. Few dare to come out of the closet for fear of being stigmatized, and for many, the pressure to perform is compounded by a further strain: whether or not to affirm their sexual identity. Breaking the code of silence that prevails on the field, on the ice and in the locker room, Paul Émile d'Entremont's latest feature takes a fresh and often moving look at some of our gay athletes, who share their experiences with the camera. They've set out to overcome prejudice in the hopes of changing things for the athletes of tomorrow.

D'Entremont is a veteran director whose very first film, [*Alone, Together*](#) (2000), won him the Best New Director award at FIN. ***Standing on the Line*** is produced by Christine Aubé, Jac Gautreau and Maryse Chapdelaine and executive produced by Michèle Bélanger and Dominic Desjardins for the Canadian Francophonie Studio – Acadie in Moncton.

Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger (66 min.)

Sunday, September 15, 3:00 p.m.

Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 1

Jordan River Anderson never got to live at home like most kids. Born with a genetic muscular disorder, he spent his first years in a Winnipeg hospital, far from his home on the Norway House Cree Nation Reserve. When he finally got clearance to move into a family setting, a dispute between federal and provincial authorities over costs would prevent the move. He died—in hospital—before his sixth birthday.

His story inspired the creation of “Jordan's Principle”: a child-first principle that aims to ensure that First Nations children get equitable access to government-funded services. But while Jordan's Principle was passed into law, many Indigenous parents still faced obstacles. Tracing the parallels between the lives of Jordan and another Indigenous child, Noah Buffalo-Jackson, the film chronicles a long legal fight that culminates with a powerful victory for Indigenous kids, their families and communities.

Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger completes Obomsawin's seven-film cycle devoted to the rights of Indigenous children and peoples that began with [*The People of the Kattawapiskak River*](#) (2012).

Luben and Elena: The Love of Art and the Art of Love (75 min.)

Sunday, September 15, 9 p.m.

Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 2

Luben and Elena is a modern-day love story about renowned artists Luben Boykov and Elena Popova, who escape repressive communist Bulgaria in the early 1990s. They find refuge on the island of Newfoundland and, over time, their work comes to intimately interpret the culture of the place, underscoring in a very tangible way what the immigrant can offer. As they traverse social systems and borders, Luben and Elena actively challenge the current climate of nationalism. We see them encompass all the places they call home, showing there is no universal definition of any of these identities. The challenge is not to inhabit one or the other, but to appreciate the freedom to express all of them at the same time. Embracing the love of art and the art of love, the protagonists remind us that the greatest risk of all is to take either for granted.

A veteran director, cinematographer and photographer, Ellie Yonova emigrated to Newfoundland from Bulgaria in 1999. ***Luben and Elena*** is produced and executive produced by Annette Clarke for the NFB's Quebec and Atlantic Studio in St. John's.

Because We Are Girls (85 min.)

Tuesday, September 17, 4:00 p.m.

Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 1

Baljit Sangra's ***Because We Are Girls*** explores the impact of sexual abuse, as a conservative Indo-Canadian family in small-town BC must come to terms with a devastating secret: three sisters were sexually abused by an older relative in their childhood years. After remaining silent for nearly two and a half decades, the sisters decide to come forward—not only to protect other young relatives, but to set an example for their daughters as well.

Because We Are Girls is produced by Selwyn Jacob and executive produced by Shirley Verduyse for the NFB's BC and Yukon Studio.

Atlantic Shorts

Atlantic Shorts, Program 3
Saturday, September 14, 3:30 p.m.
Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 8
Encore Screening:
Tuesday, September 17, 8:50 p.m.
Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 2

Balakrishna (15 min.)

When an extraordinary new resident—Balakrishna, an Indian elephant—arrived in the town of East River, Nova Scotia, in 1967, no one was more in awe of the creature than young Winton Cook, who became inseparable from his mammoth new friend. Using painterly animation, photographs and home-movie treasures, ***Balakrishna*** transmits the wistfulness of childhood memories, while evoking themes of friendship and loss and exploring the issues of immigration and elephant conservation.

Colin Mackenzie is an award-winning storyteller working in a range of genres, from documentary films to music videos. Aparna Kapur is a Vancouver-based filmmaker who won the Best Emerging Canadian Filmmaker Award at the 2008 CFC Worldwide Short Film Festival. ***Balakrishna*** is produced by Kat Baulu and executive produced by Annette Clarke for the NFB's Quebec and Atlantic Studio in Halifax.

Gun Killers (10 min. 40 sec.)

Written and directed by Jason Young, ***Gun Killers*** takes us into the rural, secluded paradise that retired blacksmiths John and Nancy Little call home. As the tranquil light of a typical day of harvesting vegetables descends into night, we experience the secret work that John and Nancy are sometimes called upon to undertake for the RCMP.

Produced by Rohan Fernando through the Quebec and Atlantic Studio's ***Re-Imagining Nova Scotia*** initiative, ***Gun Killers*** is the fourth NFB production for Young, whose 2003 feature ***Animals*** received the Rex Tasker Award for Best Documentary at the FIN: Atlantic International Film Festival. The film is executive produced by Annette Clarke for the NFB in Halifax.

I Am Skylar (15 min.)

I Am Skylar is the emotionally compelling story of an articulate 14-year-old girl who is thoughtfully defining her future and the woman she is to become. Surrounded by a family and a community who show her unconditional love as she follows her personal path, Skylar faces the complexities of being a transgender girl on the cusp of puberty with refreshing honesty and unshakeable dignity.

Rachel Bower's previous films include *In the Same Boat* and the NFB production ***The Singing Lumberjack***, both named Best Documentary at Fredericton's Silver Wave Film Festival. Produced by Rohan Fernando through the Quebec and Atlantic Studio's ***Re-Imagining Nova Scotia*** initiative, ***I Am Skylar*** is executive produced by Annette Clarke for the NFB in Halifax.

Reel East Coast Shorts Gala Presentation

Wednesday, September 18, 6:30 p.m.
Cineplex Cinemas Park Lane, Theatre 8

Ice Breakers (15 min.)

Josh Crooks is a promising teen hockey star in a sport where Black players like him are chronically underrepresented. Sandi Rankaduwa's ***Ice Breakers*** reveals the buried history of a pioneering Black hockey league in Atlantic Canada, as Crooks discovers that his unshakable passion is tied to a rich and remarkable heritage.

A writer and filmmaker who splits her time between Halifax and Brooklyn, Rankaduwa was named one of three BuzzFeed Emerging Writer Fellows for 2018. ***Ice Breakers*** is produced by Rohan Fernando and executive produced by Annette Clarke for the Quebec and Atlantic Studio's ***Re-Imagining Nova Scotia*** initiative in Halifax.

Radical

In ***Radical***, Deanne Foley profiles fellow Newfoundlander Mary Walsh, the Great Warrior Queen of Canadian comedy, musing on time wasted as an object of desire and time well spent as the fearless agent of her own destiny. Written by Walsh and produced by Annette Clarke for the Quebec and Atlantic Studio in St. John's, the film is inspired by [Come into My Parlour](#) by fellow Newfoundland filmmaker Mary Lewis, who joyously reclaims "spinsterhood" from its sexist implications in this animated homage to the undaunted great aunt who provided her first driving lesson.

In 1990, the NFB made waves with ***Five Feminist Minutes***, a series of short films produced by the trailblazing [Studio D](#), the world's first all-woman production unit. ***Radical*** is one of four films produced for the NFB's 80th anniversary year, as contemporary directors pick up the thread. Deanne Foley's credits include engaging women-centred features such as *An Audience of Chairs*, winner of multiple awards at the 2018 FIN Atlantic Film Festival.

About the NFB

The NFB is Canada's public producer of award-winning creative documentaries, auteur animation, interactive stories and participatory experiences. NFB producers are embedded in communities across the country, from St. John's to Vancouver, working with talented creators on innovative and socially relevant projects. The NFB is a leader in gender equity in film and digital media production, and is working to strengthen Indigenous-led production, guided by the recommendations of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. NFB productions have won over 7,000 awards, including 24 Canadian Screen Awards, 21 Webbys, 12 Oscars and more than 100 Genies. To access NFB works, visit [NFB.ca](#) or download its [apps](#) for mobile devices.

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nîpawistamâsowin (Cree)

NEE-pa-wista-MAA-sowin – we (small group) will stand up for others (large group).

Related Products

Electronic Press Kit | Images, trailers, synopses: [Assholes: A Theory](#) | [Balakrishna](#) | [Because We Are Girls](#) | [Conviction](#) | [Gun Killers](#) | [I Am Skylar](#) | [Ice Breakers](#) | [Five Feminist Minutes - Radical](#) | [Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger](#) | [Luben & Elena](#) | [nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up](#) | [Standing on the Line](#)

Associated Links

[FIN Atlantic International Film Festival](#)
[Sea to Sea Productions](#)
[Downstream Documentary Productions](#)
[CBC DOCS](#)
[APTN](#)
[John Walker Productions Ltd.](#)
[Bizable Media](#)
[Studio D](#)

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