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Applications now open for the third DOC Atlantic Breakthrough Program for emerging IBPOC talent

Lunenburg, N.S. — The third annual DOC Atlantic Breakthrough Program continues to open doors for emerging Indigenous, Black, and/or Persons of Colour (IBPOC) artists in Atlantic Canada.

The Program was founded by the Documentary Organization of Canada's DOC Institute and presented in association with DOC Atlantic and Lunenburg Doc Fest, with generous support from Telefilm Canada, Canadian Media Fund, Canadian Heritage, InnovationPEI, and others.

Applications are now open for the third annual DOC Atlantic Breakthrough Program. No prior experience is necessary and it is free to apply and participate in the Program.

"We are thrilled to be able to help roll out the third year of the DOC Atlantic Breakthrough Program. It has been exciting to watch the work of last year's participants as they develop their careers and voices, and we are looking forward to seeing where this year's group will take their stories and their visions," said Millefiore Clarkes, Secretary of DOC Atlantic.

Barriers to entry for filmmakers who identify as IBPOC in Atlantic Canada wishing to advance a career in the film and documentary sector still exist. The Breakthrough Program, a rigorous yet accessible program, will help fill the gap for emerging talent from the IBPOC communities, working to build capacity and business acumen in documentary filmmaking.

Comprehensive training will help four selected media creators from the Atlantic provinces who identify as IBPOC to develop, market and produce their documentary project over a 12-month period (June 2024 - May 2025). Breakthrough will offer professional development sessions led by industry experts, ongoing mentorship opportunities, plus introductions to key decision makers including distributors, broadcasters, streamers, producers, and funders.

"I have learned so much about the craft of documentary filmmaking," said Andre Anderson, 2023/24 Breakthrough participant. "This program has significantly advantaged me by providing exposure to key industry figures and offering genuine opportunities for professional advancement and personal growth."

The Program, led by Lunenburg Doc Fest, will begin with a six-week online workshop series in June and July 2024. Sessions will guide participants through authentic storytelling techniques. Breakthrough will further provide practical industry knowledge through workshops covering film financing, producing, and budgeting, alongside business and legal affairs. One-to-one project feedback sessions with an internationally renowned pitch coach will follow, as will group and one-on-one mentorship from an acclaimed Canadian documentarian. Past mentors include the internationally renowned film editor, story editor, and creative/editorial consultant Ricardo Acosta;

award-winning documentary filmmaker and producer Mila Aung-Thwin; and seasoned CBC Broadcast Executive Lesley Birchard.

Participants will then attend the 11th Lunenburg Doc Fest (LDF) slated for September 18-22, 2024 and the Dock Market — LDF's conference and industry market. A mentor will help guide their projects throughout the winter. The Program concludes with travel to the Hot Docs Forum at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in May 2025, during which the group will partake in professional development sessions, attend film screenings, and network with peers and industry professionals. Participants will receive support for travel and accommodation plus full festival and industry passes to both events. They will also gain a free two-year membership to the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC).

“Lunenburg Doc Fest is dedicated to fostering opportunities for more equity and inclusivity within the Atlantic Canadian film industry. We are delighted and honoured to lead the third edition of the DOC Atlantic Breakthrough Program and play a part in bringing new and underrepresented voices to the screen,” said Bruce MacCormack, chairperson of the festival.

Atlantic Canadian citizens who identify as Indigenous, Black, and/or a Person of Colour and are available and motivated to advance their documentary project are encouraged to apply. The application deadline is June 3, 2024. Selected applicants will be notified by June 11, 2024. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://lunenburgdocfest.com/industry/doc-atlantic-breakthrough-program/>

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Lunenburg Doc Fest's mission is to entertain, educate, and inspire by showcasing the documentary art form and creating a cultural connection between audiences and artists in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia. The festival is presented with generous support from Canadian Heritage, The Government of Canada, Telefilm Canada, Canadian Media Fund, the Town of Lunenburg, and Nova Scotia Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage.

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