

**Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) and
imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival
2016 MENTORSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT**

Toronto, April 13, 2016—imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival and the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) are pleased to announce that Toronto-based Anishinaabe artist **Jamie Whitecrow** is the recipient of the 12th annual LIFT/imagineNATIVE Mentorship. This annual mentorship was developed to offer an Indigenous artist living in the Greater Toronto Area the opportunity to expand their practice into the realm of film, and present their new work in a professional context. Jamie will be paired with a suitable mentor, enrolled in LIFT’s seasonal workshops and will be provided with access to LIFT’s production and post-production equipment. She will receive additional financial and resource support from imagineNATIVE and other to-be-confirmed mentorship partners to complete a film for premiere at the 2016 imagineNATIVE festival (October 19–23).

“LIFT is very excited to support Jamie Whitecrow during this year’s mentorship,” says Chris Kennedy, LIFT’s Executive Director. “Her proposal displayed a unique vision of a future world that has resonance with the difficulties of today. It has been a while since a narrative project came out of this program and we’re especially keen for the sci-fi bend!”

“imagineNATIVE welcomes a new voice to the Indigenous media arts community whose dystopian concept and thorough application impressed the Selection Committee,” adds Jason Ryle, imagineNATIVE’s Executive Director. “We’re very excited to see Jamie’s vision come to life on film at imagineNATIVE this October, thanks to our valuable and longstanding professional development partnership with LIFT.”

“I am humbled by this opportunity, and so thrilled that LIFT/imagineNATIVE continue to support artists and their visions. The chance to share the stories that have kept me going all of these years is incredible. ‘Heidi Lost’ is one of those stories, a short cyber-punk vignette of a strong, fierce, indigenous female whose very existence challenges the institutionalized violence of the state. This film will be intensely challenging to create and all the more real because of this mentorship.”

—Jamie Whitecrow

J.L. Whitecrow is Anishinaabe from the Treaty #3 territory. She is Muskrat Clan, and has been working in Urban Aboriginal Community Development for ten years. She’s also a multidisciplinary visual artist, writer, vocalist, and an emerging stand-up comedian with Manifest Destiny’s Child—an Indigenous Women’s Comedy Collective based in Toronto. In her free time, she sings and plays synthesizer in a post-punk band, as well, fronts a riot-grrl band.

Previous year’s mentees include actor and choreographer Michael Greyeyes (*Seven Seconds*); Dora and Juno Award nominee Jani Lauzon (*eu•tha•na•sia*); Michelle Latimer (*Tomorrow*); Tyler Hagan (*Estuary*), Adrienne Marcus Raja (*Soli*) and Jaene Castrillon (*Celebration of Darkness*). Jamie will premiere her new short at the 17th annual imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, October 19-23, 2016.

On behalf of the Selection Committee, thank you to all of this year's incredible applicants! To find out more about this annual mentorship, and other artistic opportunities available through imagineNATIVE, please contact programming@imagineNATIVE.org

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About the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)

LIFT is an artist-run charitable organization dedicated to facilitating excellence in the moving image through media arts education and production resources. LIFT exists to provide support and encouragement for independent filmmakers and artists through affordable access to production, post-production and exhibition equipment; professional and creative development; workshops and courses; commissioning and exhibitions; artist-residencies; and a variety of other services. Founded in 1981 by a small collective, LIFT has since grown to become one of the foremost centres of its kind globally. www.lift.ca

About imagineNATIVE

Founded in 1999, imagineNATIVE is the international centre for Indigenous-made media arts. Its annual imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival celebrates 17 years on October 19-23, 2016 and is the world's largest showcase of film, video, audio, and digital media works created by Indigenous directors, producers, and screenwriters. Year-round imagineNATIVE presents a national tour, screenings across Canada and internationally, and a community screening series based in the Greater Toronto Area. imagineNATIVE is committed to the professional development of Indigenous artists through its numerous workshops, labs, and panels through its Industry Series and through strategic partnerships internationally. imagineNATIVE showcases, promotes, and celebrates Canadian and international Indigenous filmmakers and media artists and is committed to a greater understanding by audiences of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and artistic expressions. www.imagineNATIVE.org