

**LIFT WELCOMES THE PARTICIPANTS  
OF THE NEWCOMER FILMMENTOR PROGRAM**

**Toronto, October 3, 2017**—The staff at the **Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)** are pleased to welcome six newcomers to our facilities to participate in the **Newcomer Filmmmentor** program. In the past few years, we have become aware of an increased interest from newcomers who are either looking to translate their film experiences into a Canadian context or looking to transition into filmmaking. However, the challenges encountered on their part are apparent and understandably overwhelming. Through this mentorship, LIFT hopes to ease their transition process, while bolstering their creative and technical skills.

During the program, participants will engage in various workshops designed to familiarize them with the Canadian film field, as well as provide the necessary resources, mentorship and equipment, for each to produce a short film by the end of the program.

Through a series of weekly workshops, the participants will first develop their scripts, which they will then produce in November, and finally screen the completed films at a special screening in December 2017.

Mentors have been selected to carefully complement the group of participants. Confirmed mentors (to date) are: **Moe Abbas, Marcelle Aleid, Kinana Issa, Ammar Keshodia** and **Alexi Manis**.

The participants of the Newcomer Filmmmentor Program are: **Ramzi Alkaysi, Wais Amiree, Gursimran Datla, Salva Honarjou, Reeda Tariq** and **Amber Williams-King**. Their bios are below.

**Ramzi Alkaysi** is an Iraqi cinematographer, who moved to Canada in early 2017. He became involved in the Canadian film industry during a short period.

**Wais Amiree** is originally from Afghanistan where he worked as a Director and Producer in film and television for seven years. He moved to Toronto, Canada in January 2016 and is currently a student at City Adult Learning Center (CALC).

**Gursimran Datla** is an independent filmmaker who moved to Toronto from India. In May, his student short film “Refuge,” won the Best Film Award at Donny Awards held at Royal Cinema Toronto. In 2016, Datla was one of the finalist of Sundance/Roger Ebert Fellowship for Film Criticism. Currently he is working on two short scripts based on immigration crisis and resistance among generations.

**Salva Honarjou** earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Cinema and Television from Beykent University in Istanbul, Turkey in 2015. Salva’s specialties are behind-the-scenes video and photo documentation and still photography. Salva’s current preoccupation is developing new skills that would enable her to eventually transition into the field of cinematography.

**Reeda Tariq** is excited not only for her final year as a Sociology major at Glendon College, but also for the chance to be part of the LIFT Newcomer Filmmmentor Program. Hoping to one day become Afghanistan’s answer to Mika Ninagawa or Ang Lee, she’s excited to see how much she grows during the next few months.

**Amber Williams-King** is a multi-disciplinary Antiguan artist practicing in Toronto. She uses various mediums to explore sexuality, gender, representation and the intersections of identity in the context of Caribbean history and culture.



Should you have additional questions about this program, please contact **LIFT Education and Outreach Administrator Rolla Tahir** at 416.588.6444 Ext. 223 or [specialprojects@lift.on.ca](mailto:specialprojects@lift.on.ca)

**Newcomer Filmmmentor is supported out of LIFT's operational revenue.**

Anyone wishing to support our programs can donate through Canada Helps:  
<http://lift.ca/about/donate-support-contemporary-film>



**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](http://www.lift.ca)

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