

**THE LIAISON OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS OF TORONTO (LIFT)
ANNOUNCES THE 2025 LIFT DIGITAL CINEMA RESIDENCY RECIPIENTS
NOOR KHAN AND KURTIS WATSON**

Toronto, May 20, 2025—The **Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)** is pleased to announce that **Noor Khan** and **Kurtis Watson** were the **2025 Digital Cinema Residents** this winter, a program launched for the first time last year in 2024. The Digital Cinema Residency both supports the production and post-production of a digital cinema work, and provides mentorship towards obtaining the necessary skills to create their projects. Artists have the opportunity to work with LIFT's extensive roster of industry standard digital cinema cameras, accessories, and our digital post-production suites. They both used their time in residency to work on documentary projects, bringing their ideas close to completion with our assistance.

Noor Khan (b. 1994, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) is a multidisciplinary artist of South Asian descent, with Pashtun and Punjabi roots. Shaped by a lineage of nomadism and experiences of migration, Noor's work investigates the socio-economic and political ramifications of displacement. Through replication and documentation, their practice explores human-made systems—objects, materials, architecture, infrastructure, policy, and law—that influence cultural, political, and socio-economic dynamics. Grounded in community collaboration, Noor uses art as a means to reconnect with people, land, and global indigenous value systems. Noor holds an M.F.A. in Community Arts and a Certificate in Art Education from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), a Certificate in Digital Art from OCAD University, and a B.A. in Community Development from the University of Toronto. Noor has been artist in residence at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (North Adams, MA), Doris McCarthy Gallery (Toronto, ON), and a fellow at Cranbrook Academy of Art (Detroit, MI). Their work has been recognized locally and nationally by organizations such as Scarborough Arts and the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television. Supported by the Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, FACTOR Canada, and the New York Foundation for the Arts, Noor's projects have been showcased at prominent events and venues including Nuit Blanche (Toronto), AWAKENINGS at Toronto History Museums, and MUTEK (Montreal). Studio visits can be arranged with the artist. For the most up-to-date contact information, please visit <https://www.bynoorkhan.com>.

"I'm honored to join LIFT as a Digital Cinema Resident for 2025. This residency offers an incredible opportunity to explore and expand my artistic practice within the vibrant filmmaking community at LIFT. I look forward to bringing new stories to life during this residency. Throughout this residency, I'll be working on my short film, 'Function,' an autobiographical narrative short. In 'Function,' objects become vessels of cultural memory, shaping and reflecting traditions, identity, and belonging. This film delves into the ways altered, lost, or replaced objects transform my connection to cultural heritage, centering on the charpai—a traditional South Asian woven bed. Through the act of

reimagining and crafting a charpai using natural fibers and a wooden frame, I embark on a journey of reclamation and continuity as a South Asian navigating a diasporic existence. Blending storytelling with tactile craftsmanship, *Function* invites viewers into a meditative exploration of the charpai's evolving role in a diasporic context. Layered with audio recordings of community members and personal reflections, the film weaves a sensory narrative that captures the shifting meaning of objects and the resilience of cultural practices in the face of voluntary and involuntary change."

—Noor Khan

Kurtis Watson is a Toronto-based documentary filmmaker originally from Courtice, Ontario. His short films have been selected at film festivals such as Durham Region International Film Festival, Scout Film Festival Vermont, and Kingston Canadian Film Festival. Kurtis' music videos have premiered on sites such as Exclaim!, Canadian Beats, V13, and Digital Tour Bus. Kurtis is a 2020 graduate of Humber College's Bachelor of Film and Media Production program. Having cut his teeth in a small town, much of Kurtis' work and interest is counter to the mainstream. He strives to highlight self-awareness and expression in his films to allow others to see themselves within his work. His debut feature-length documentary called "My Dad's Tapes" premiered at the 2024 Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival and was one of the Top 20 audience favourites. <https://linktr.ee/kurtiswatson>

"Thank you so much to LIFT for this opportunity. This residency is giving me the space, time, and resources needed to bring this film to life. I am incredibly grateful to my boyfriend Leo Dean and his best friend River Aves, for bringing me along on this journey and entrusting me to tell their story. The project I am work on, entitled 'Until We Finally Meet,' is a short documentary about two best friends, who met online over 15 years ago and formed an unbreakable bond as they both transitioned together. After one invites the other to be the best man at his wedding, they decide to finally meet in real life for the first time. Will meeting in person jeopardize their friendship and how will they navigate going back online after saying goodbye?"

—Kurtis Watson

This residency opportunity is presented as part of the Digital Skills for Youth (DS4Y) program coordinated by the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA) and funded by the Government of Canada.



Funded by the
Government
of Canada



The **Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA)** is a member-driven non-profit national organization working to advance and strengthen the media arts community in Canada. Representing over 100 independent film, video, audio, and new media production, distribution, and exhibition organizations in all parts of the country, the IMAA serves over 16,000 independent media artists and cultural workers. <https://www.imaa.ca>

The Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) is Canada's foremost artist-run production and education organization dedicated to celebrating excellence in the moving image. 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. <http://lift.ca>

LIFT is supported by self-generated revenue as well as the following year-round funders: the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), the Ontario Arts Council (OAC), Ontario Arts Foundation, the Government of Ontario and the Toronto Arts Council (TAC).

As a charitable organization, **LIFT graciously accepts donations via our CanadaHelps page**. If you would like to support our filmmaking community, please visit <https://lift.ca/donate>

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For additional information please see <https://lift.ca> or e-mail LIFT Executive Director Chris Kennedy at director@lift.ca