

Writers Guild of Canada announces first participants of The Cohort

Six emerging to mid-level members from diverse backgrounds selected for the inaugural year of the WGC mentorship and career development program.

For immediate release

Toronto, ON | September 9, 2026 — The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) is pleased to announce the six participants selected for the inaugural year of The Cohort, a new annual program from the WGC's IDEA Committee supporting emerging to mid-level members from diverse backgrounds.

The Cohort pairs each participant with an experienced WGC member for a mentorship focused on rewriting and polishing an original script. Alongside script mentorship, the IDEA Committee will organize workshops and group sessions with showrunners, screenwriters, and other industry professionals to support each participant's career goals. The six-month program concludes with a stakeholder event where participants can promote themselves and their scripts to industry decision-makers.

"We are very excited about this new venture, and based on the volume of applications we received, it's clear our members are hungry for a curated program like The Cohort to further their writing careers," said Anthony Q. Farrell, Chair of the IDEA Committee. "We are looking forward to working with this first group to create a foundation that will benefit writers for years to come."

The inaugural Cohort is:



Kristina Fithern-Stiele (Calgary, Alberta):

Kristina is a writer and filmmaker working in Calgary, Alberta. She has written, directed, and produced several short films, exploring her Tlingit heritage and queer identity through her art. In 2021, Kristina's horror anthology series, *In the Woods*, was developed with Blink49 Studios. Kristina shot her short film, *Mother of All Creation*, in 2025, which served as proof of concept for her feature film of the same name. The feature script was written and further developed in imagineNATIVE's 2025/26 Feature Writing Lab. The film follows a woman pregnant with a universe as she tries to get an abortion.



Amir Kahnamousse (Toronto, Ontario):

Amir is an Iranian-Canadian writer and actor based in Toronto. His feature script, *Port of Call*, was a finalist in the Canadian Film Festival Script Contest and received the 2018 Daryl Duke Prize. He later participated in the Whistler Film Festival Screenwriting Lab, where he developed a script that went on to win the Writers Guild of Canada Jim Burt Prize. His feature film, *Please After You*, received Harold Greenberg Development and Canada Media Fund production funding and had its world premiere at the 2024 Whistler Film Festival, where it competed for the Borsos Prize. Amir holds an MFA in Film from York University.



Celeste Koon (Toronto, Ontario):

Celeste is a mixed-race WGC and CSA nominated writer with a focus on children's media and animation. She is the creator of tween animated series *Armadillo Avalanche* (Blue Ant Media), and co-creator of stop-motion preschool series *Bumpadoo!* (Turtlebox Productions, TVOKids). She's written for numerous Canadian and international broadcasters and production companies, been a part of many career development labs, and is working on her first graphic novel for Annick Press. Celeste's script for *The Cohort* is her first venture into writing one-hour drama. Celeste also has a rabbit, a unicycle, and no sense of direction – resulting in many exciting exploits!



Gorman Lee (Vancouver, British Columbia):

Gorman is a Chinese-Canadian screenwriter whose credits include: CBC and CW's *Wild Cards*; Prime Video's *The Lake*; Netflix's *The Imperfects*, and *The Order*; and Syfy's *Van Helsing*. His feature film, *Golden Delicious*, screened at 61 film festivals and had its theatrical premiere in 2023. He is a fellow of the 2022 Warner Bros Discovery X Canadian Academy Writer's Program, the 2021 BIPOC TV & Film Showrunner Training Bootcamp, and the 2014 WGC and Bell Media's Diverse Screenwriters Program. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC, and a BFA in Filmmaking from SFU.



Berend McKenzie (Toronto, Ontario):

Berend (he/she/they interchangeably) is a Toronto-based, award-winning playwright, screenwriter, actor and published author. A recent graduate of the CFC's 2025 Norman Jewison Film Program, they are also a 2021 inductee in the Warner Bros. Discovery X Global Access Writers' Academy, the 2024 Emerging 20 Mentorship Program, the 2024 Netflix Banff Diversity of Voices Initiative, and a 2024 recipient of the BSO Development Fund. Berend's full-length plays include, the outrageous, award-winning queer puppet show for adults, *Get Off the Cross Mary!* And their groundbreaking, one-person show, *NGGRFG (would you say the name of this play?)*.



Reem Morsi (Toronto, Ontario):

Reem is an Egyptian-Canadian writer-director and former UN human rights officer. A graduate of the London Film School, she wrote and produced the Telefilm Talent to Watch feature, *Banned*, and has since expanded into television, directing episodes of *Virgins!* for CBC Gem. Her feature screenplay, *Bootleg*, was selected for Cannes' L'Atelier, Berlinale Script Station, TorinoFilmLab's ComedyLab and Realness, and received the SFFILM Rainin Grant and Telefilm New Voices Award. She is an alumna of the Canadian Film Centre, Women in the Director's Chair, the CFC/Netflix Accelerator and the Warner Bros./Canadian Academy Directors Program, with series projects developed and pitched through international labs and markets, including Authentica and Series Mania.

About The Cohort

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ABOUT THE WGC

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents more than 2,500 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. Our members create stories that entertain and inspire audiences on every screen.