

Sydney Wilson

Grand Prize Winner – 5-8 category

Topic: Cameron Bailey

When you think of the Toronto International Film Festival, there is only one name that comes to mind: Cameron Bailey.

He is the Artistic Director of the Toronto International Film Festival—a title he’s held for just under a decade. He is credited with raising the TIFF reputation and profile to rival its French counterpart - the Cannes film festival. He uses his knowledge to make an inclusive place for filmmakers all around the world, while magnifying Canada’s reputation for producing extraordinary and original films that show the rich diversity of our country. Bailey’s experience growing up as a viewer greatly informed his choices as director; Bailey made a keen observation that many books and films were not very relatable to his life because of their lack of diversity. In 2018 he was appointed the co-head of TIFF. When he was appointed, in addition to being the architect of TIFF’s cultural mosaic, Cameron personally mandated the inclusion of a diverse range of films. Cameron upholds a very powerful position as he chooses the voices in the festival’s selection of gala presentations. Beyond the festival, he is shaping the future of inclusivity inside the industry through teaching and mentorship. He is an instructor in film curation at the University of Toronto and is on the Advisory Council for Western University’s School for the Arts and Humanities. “The arts thrive on diversity: the beauty of different perspectives, the insight garnered from other cultures, the unity found in embracing stories unlike your own. The same can be said of diversity in Canada,” Bailey says. When they ask him what his favourite part of the national anthem is he says “From Far and Wide Oh Canada!” In 2019, Bailey has effectively unified the beauty of diversity and embraced the stories of a global audience.