



YEAR-ROUND ARTISTIC POLICY Effective as of March 2022

imagineNATIVE is the world's largest presenter of Indigenous screen content. The organization is recognized locally, nationally, and internationally for excellence and innovation in programming and as the global centre for Indigenous media arts. imagineNATIVE is committed to creating a greater understanding of Indigenous peoples and cultures by presenting contemporary Indigenous-made media art, including film, video, audio, and digital media.

We are an Indigenous-led organization located on the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, and the Huron-Wendat nations. We acknowledge the Dish With One Spoon covenant. Based on collective stewardship, this treaty's spirit and sharing of land and resources extend to all nations living in present-day Toronto.

The imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival is the world's largest Indigenous Festival of its kind. The Festival is imagineNATIVE's primary event hosted annually every October in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. At our Festival, we present Artistic and Industry programming showcasing Film + Video, Digital + Interactive, and Audio media work created by Indigenous artists (directors, producers, writers, designers) at all levels of experience.

Year-Round Artistic programming occurs outside the Festival approximately from December through August. They include but are not limited to our annual Tour program, panel discussions, artist talks, curated screenings and exhibitions, retrospectives, commissions, residencies, research projects, co-presentations, and special initiatives. The Artistic Director activates imagineNATIVE's strategic plan to determine the Year-Round programming.

The **Year-Round Artistic Policy** comprises the guiding principles that ground the eligibility and process of selecting the organization's works. The policy is a living document and continually evolves to reflect the community of Indigenous artists we serve. It is reviewed annually by the Artistic Director and approved by imagineNATIVE's Executive Director and Board of Directors.



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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

imagineNATIVE presents new and innovative film, video, audio, and digital media works. This mandate guides our programming and initiatives towards reaffirming concepts of Indigenous narrative sovereignty.

As an Indigenous-led and Indigenous artist-centred organization, we support the artistic visions and perspectives of Indigenous artists working in film and media arts in an inclusive and professional manner. As identified in our mission statement, we are committed to a greater understanding by audiences of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and artistic expressions. Works are therefore not required to have overt Indigenous content or themes, and can be productions made at all budget levels. We strive to represent a variety of ideas, themes, and genres, in addition to a diversity of Indigenous languages, nations, and cultures.

EQUITY

imagineNATIVE acknowledges that barriers to services exist within Indigenous communities, particularly for equity-seeking members. We are committed to acting as a positive force in reducing and eliminating these barriers. To achieve this, and as stated in our Equity Policy, imagineNATIVE will:

- Ensure that diverse members of the Indigenous communities it serves have equitable access to its services, resources, and decision-making;
- Be non-discriminatory and promote the goals of anti-racism, access, and equity;
- Take reasonable steps to ensure its services, programs, and decision-making reflect the communities it serves. This decision-making is never done individually and is a consensus process.

CARE

imagineNATIVE adheres to a [Code of Conduct](#) and strongly encourages all programmed artists, staff, contract employees, volunteers, and guests to read and respect it.





YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMMING

At present, the fields of practice for our Year-Round Programming are Film + Video, Digital + Interactive, and Audio works created by Indigenous artists. All works must meet the eligibility requirements outlined below, but there are exceptions to this. Due to historical and systemic barriers faced by Indigenous artists in the Canadian film and media arts milieu, works from the 1980s to early-2010s can be accepted if made in collaboration with Indigenous creators. The imagineNATIVE Artistic Director determines the content of imagineNATIVE's year-round programming. Programming considers individual titles, overarching themes, and programming structures that push the boundaries of innovating programming.

ELIGIBILITY

Film + Video (e.g. episodic series for web and television, music videos)

- The director must be Indigenous;
- The writer or key producer must also be Indigenous, or both;
- Joint creative positions (co-director, co-writer, co-producer) may be considered by the imagineNATIVE Artistic Director with additional requirements to clarify creative and decision-making processes.
- Any production dates and premiere status are accepted.

Digital + Interactive (e.g. video games, VR, 360, AR, web-based experiences)

- The lead creative (director/writer/lead programmer/lead designer, etc) must be Indigenous;
- Joint creative positions (co-lead designer, co-narrative designer, co-lead programmer) may be considered by the imagineNATIVE Artistic Director with additional requirements to clarify creative and decision-making processes.
- Any production dates and premiere status are accepted.

Audio

Sound Art + Fiction Category

(e.g. soundscapes, audio art, radio plays, narrative podcasts, etc)

- The lead creative must be Indigenous;
- For radio plays and narrative (fiction) podcasts, the producer and writer must be Indigenous.





- Joint creative positions (co-collaborator, co-designer) may be considered by the imagineNATIVE Artistic Director with additional requirements to clarify creative and decision-making processes.
- Any production dates and premiere status are accepted.

Audio Non-Fiction Category

(e.g. non-fiction podcasts, documentary podcasts)

- The lead creative (producer/host) must be Indigenous;
- Joint creative positions (co-producer, co-host) may be considered by the imagineNATIVE Artistic Director with additional requirements to clarify creative and decision-making processes.
- Any production dates and premiere status are accepted.

All other roles — including the executive producer, associate producer, or any individual credited as an advisor or consultant — do NOT fulfill eligibility requirements for consideration for any of our presentation categories.

We understand that in some cases, an Indigenous person may not know their nation or community due to the impacts of colonial or assimilationist practices. With the intent of gaining a better understanding of these realities, we welcome your submission and ask that you articulate your story.

In the interest of upholding our mandate's integrity to support Indigenous Artists, imagineNATIVE reserves the right to inquire further about any submission concerning eligibility.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMMING

The imagineNATIVE strategic plan guides the priorities for our artistic programming. With considerable thought and deliberation and beyond our eligibility terms, programming considerations include but are not limited to:

- A balance of unique and new perspectives expressed within the content of the work;



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- A cultural, artistic, and social significance to Indigenous peoples and communities. A diverse representation that reflects local, national, and international perspectives;
- A creative approach to form characterized by innovative representations, content, aesthetic form, and genre;
- The relevance of form and content, with consideration to emerging themes and issues that present themselves during the programming process that informs the overall program's artistic framework;
- Consideration of available programming slots, scheduling, and budget.

TOUR PROGRAM

The imagineNATIVE Tour is a selection of Indigenous works from Canada presented at the previous Festival and curated by the Artistic Director. The imagineNATIVE Tour is currently offered on imagineNATIVE's online platform, bringing Indigenous-made film and video works and community engagement activities to communities across Turtle Island (Canada) and internationally.

PANEL DISCUSSIONS + ARTIST TALKS

imagineNATIVE presents artistically curated conversations that supplement contemporary themes and issues. Panel discussions and artist talks are determined by the Artistic Director or in collaboration with partnering organizations.

CURATED SCREENINGS + EXHIBITIONS

The Artistic Director curates film programs or film/video screenings determining the overarching theme. The program may consist of a series of films, a panel discussion, and/or an essay. Artists must be Indigenous and works may be featured regardless of their production dates.

RETROSPECTIVES

The Artistic Director invites guest curators to program a film/video screening showing the development of a particular artist's work over their career. They work directly with the Artistic Director to determine the overarching theme. The program may consist of a film program, a panel discussion, and/or an essay. Curators and artists must be Indigenous and works may be featured regardless of their production dates. The imagineNATIVE strategic plan (as determined by the Artistic Director) guides our priorities for Retrospectives.



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RESIDENCIES

imagineNATIVE collaborates with artist-run centres, institutions, and arts organizations to host an Indigenous residency program. Residency themes are determined in consultation with the partnering organization and the Artistic Director. Participants and artists must be Indigenous and works may be featured regardless of their production dates. Residencies occur with the partnering organization and often consist of artist talks, workshops, professional development, studio creation, and screenings.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

The Artistic Director determines year-round research projects in concert with the imagineNATIVE Executive Director. The research projects reflect the fields of practice we represent, support Indigenous artists in some capacity, and support our strategic priorities.

CO-PRESENTATIONS

Co-presentations are screenings, panels, artist talks, and exhibitions that imagineNATIVE presents with other arts, cultural, and Indigenous organizations. Works within film presentations must have at least two out of the three above-the-line creative positions held by Indigenous artists. Artists included in panels, artist talks, and exhibitions must be Indigenous.

PARTNERSHIP EXHIBITIONS

The Artistic Director collaborates with artist-run centres, institutions, and arts organizations to present Indigenous exhibitions (group or solo). Each organization leads the exhibition themes in collaboration with the Artistic Director. Curators and artists must be Indigenous and works may be featured regardless of their production dates. Partnership exhibitions can include essays, artist talks, and screenings.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The Artistic Director curates year-round Special initiatives. Artists must be Indigenous and works may be featured regardless of their production dates.





CONFLICT OF INTEREST

imagineNATIVE supports Indigenous artists' work, including those who give their time, insight, and talent as Board members, staff, contractors, and volunteers.

The Indigenous film and media arts community is a small one. We value Indigenous artistic practices and representation within our organization. We cannot disadvantage Indigenous artists who give their time to imagineNATIVE by excluding them from presentation opportunities.

These artists are eligible to be featured as part of the programming. They are not present for programming discussions and decisions about their work, nor do they have input into the scheduling. These artists are also eligible for the annual imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival and for consideration for our Awards. The Festival and Awards are adjudicated by Programming Committees and independent juries at arm's length from the organization and adhere to a consensus decision-making process.

Please contact our Program Manager, Kaitlynn Tomaselli, at programming@imagineNATIVE.org if you have any questions or require clarification.

