



New York International Children's Film Festival announces inaugural *NYICFF Industry Forum* February 28–29, 2020

NYICFF brings industry leaders and content makers together for inspired dialogues, exclusive looks at new all ages projects, and discussions on diverse storytelling and inclusion both on and behind the screen.

The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment NYC on board as Founding Partner.

Executives and filmmakers from **Major** and **Independent Studios** to present.

NEW YORK (Wednesday, January 10, 2020)—The Oscar-qualifying New York International Children's Film Festival announces its inaugural *NYICFF Industry Forum: Towards an Inclusive Future*, to take place at SVA Theatre, in New York City, February 28-29, 2020.

NYICFF's forum offers an unparalleled opportunity to bring a community of industry leaders and content makers together in New York to share new projects and discuss key issues around representation in all-ages media, on and behind the screen.

The two-day program will include:

- Introductory remarks from **Anne del Castillo**, Commissioner of the **MAYOR'S OFFICE OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT**
- A keynote address from **Julie Ann Crommett**, Vice President of Multicultural Audience Engagement at **THE WALT DISNEY STUDIOS** and Women In Animation (WIA) Secretary and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair
- Presentations and panel discussions, including conversations on inclusive practices and exclusive looks of recent and new projects by:
 - **Karen Rupert Toliver**, producer of the acclaimed short film *Hair Love* and Executive Vice President, Creative, **SONY PICTURES ANIMATION**
 - **Peilin Chou**, producer of *Abominable* and Chief Creative Officer, **PEARL STUDIO**
 - **Dice Tsutsumi**, co-director of Oscar®-nominated short film *The Dam Keeper*, and Founder, **TONKO HOUSE**
 - **Gerta Xhelo**, Director of Production, TED-ED, producer of 1000+ mission driven animated short films, professor at Pratt University, co-founder of **TOMATO BEACH ANIMATION**
- **Animators All Around**, NYICFF's signature annual panel illuminating the creative process in animation, from inspiration to sketch to screen, featuring **Jill Culton**, director of *Abominable* and *Open Season*

"With expanded industry presence in New York and growing opportunities that studios and SVODs bring to children's media and the animation sector, we felt this was the perfect time to launch this valuable platform for exchange," said **NYICFF Executive Director Nina Guralnick**.

Further announcements regarding networking opportunities, demonstrations, and full speaker line-up will be announced in late January 2020. Passes on sale January 22.

"As one of the world's most diverse cities, and a celebrated capital of culture, New York has a rich history of producing children's content. The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment is proud to be a founding partner of the New York International Children's Film Festival's first industry forum," said **Commissioner Anne del Castillo**. "New York City has a longstanding tradition of championing storytelling that inspires the imaginations of children and adults alike and the five boroughs have been home to countless productions for children of all ages."

Karen Rupert Toliver states "I am thrilled to be representing Sony Animation this year at NYICFF. It is truly a unique and important festival showcasing the best of children's programming from around the world, and with this year's industry forum, it's exciting to be given the chance to celebrate just how diverse this medium can be."

Peilin Chou says "I am honored to represent Pearl Studio at NYICFF this year, and excited to be a part of this important dialogue about diverse storytelling and inclusion. Pearl Studio's mission to create extraordinary global family entertainment that awakens our audience through representation both on and off screen perfectly aligns with the values of NYICFF, so I am particularly thrilled to be a part of this inaugural forum and conversation."

"Our aim is to inject the same spirit from our curated festival selections—one that celebrates the best in filmmaking and distinctive, culturally rich storytelling for all ages—into inspired conversations around inclusive production practices, while sharing some enticing glimpses at new projects and collaborative opportunities," said **NYICFF Programming Director Maria-Christina Villaseñor**.

NYICFF has long understood that children's media is incredibly powerful—culturally, artistically, and economically. Family-focused content is a hugely significant cornerstone of the screen industry. At the same time, NYICFF recognizes that kids, tweens and teens are a voracious and discerning audience that appreciates diverse viewpoints and complex stories told in stylistically interesting ways. Creators of children's media are often at the forefront when it comes to inclusion in storytelling, showing a path forward at a time when the wider entertainment industry is seeking ways to create meaningful, sustainable change in this area.

The *NYICFF Industry Forum* will host local, national and international creative and cultural practitioners and content creators: executives, directors, producers, distributors, writers, animators, and film and media students, to generate thought-provoking discussion, actionable ideas, and collaborative opportunities. Recognizing the importance of nurturing new and diverse voices, NYICFF welcomes participation from those at all career stages—from emerging, independent creators to established makers.

NYICFF Industry Forum is organized by The New York International Children's Film Festival, with Inaugural Partner, NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment; Presenting Sponsor: Xero; Impact Sponsors, The Gersh Agency, and Nathan Love; and Partners SVA Theatre, Women in Animation New York, and citizenM.

Further speakers and full program to be announced in late January 2020. More information about NYICFF's Industry Symposium can be found at: www.nyicff.org/industry or email industry@nyicff.org

About NYICFF

New York International Children's Film Festival (NYICFF) is a year-round, nonprofit arts organization building a more dynamic film culture for those aged 3-18, their families, and their communities. For over two decades, NYICFF has delivered impactful programming to children, families, students, educators, filmmakers, and screen professionals through its three core activities: its Oscar-qualifying, annual NYC-based film festival; its city-wide media arts and literacy program, *NYICFF Film-Ed*; and its national screening program serving major and regional cultural institutions, cinemas, and museums, *NYICFF Kid Flicks*. The inaugural 2020 *NYICFF Industry Forum* will bring leaders and creators together for dialogue around inclusion and representation in the creation and dissemination of media content for young audiences.

NYICFF 2020

NYICFF's 2020 Festival will take place from February 21 to March 15, 2020 at major venues throughout the city, featuring over 100 short and feature films from around the world.

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