

Executive Director's Report to Membership

WIFT-AT Annual General Meeting, Jun 13, 2022

Before reporting on these first six months with WIFT-AT, I'd like to thank the board of directors for inviting me to join this organization, whose values and vision are so personally important to me, having spent really rich and meaningful time in screen-based collaboration in Atlantic Canada, as a queer woman.

I'd also like to thank the membership for their kind and patient support through the changes underway. Change can be exciting and filled with possibility, but it can also feel bumpy and confusing, especially to folks who aren't designing or steering the change. Maybe the people you used to contact have changed, and the new ones don't have all the information that your previous contacts did, or they do things a different way, or the new system isn't working perfectly yet. As excited as I am about the vision the board of directors has invited me to work towards, I am also aware of the need to ensure that the fundamental benefits of membership are protected. I'm grateful for the understanding you've helped me gain so far, about your experience of WIFT-AT, and I hope to continue to hear from you directly to keep learning more about who you are and what WIFT-AT is for you, and what we might do together in this organization. Please reach out, any time.

So now to report on the portion of the year that I've been part of. I began my work with the board in December, supporting their strategic planning and governance review.

I began full-time in the role in January, and in addition to continuing the planning and governance support of the Board, there was also all the necessary onboarding: establishing credentials and accounts in many tools and systems, and connecting with core people and organizations. Special thanks to Britt Kerr and Tracey Hatcher for the humour and spirit they brought to their support of this work.

With a flagship program (the Making Waves conference) traditionally held in March, hiring and initial logistics got underway very early in the year as well. We were fortunate to receive many impressive applications for positions funded through Employment Nova Scotia's Job Creation Partnership, and luckier still to be able to hire Ellie Rideout and Rachel Moore through the process. Ellie and Rachel entered a major effort from day one, joining forces with Morgan Salter in the production of WIFT-AT Making Waves. Morgan's insightful experience of past WMW conferences, coupled with her tremendous talents as a producer, provided crucial vision and leadership for the team. The conference was planned as an online event, as it had been in 2021, and the return of Bonnie Fraser as Digital

Development Coordinator was instrumental in this format working equally well for screenings as for networking, conversations, and ticketing. The annual presentation of WAVE awards, while a highlight, did not translate as well to online as the other aspects of the conference, and as a result, plans are underway for an in-person event later this year as a proper tribute to the achievements of those honoured and to the important work of the selection jury.

As is usually the case with events like this, many people made many valuable contributions, and I was awed by and grateful for each. Rachel has provided a more detailed account of the conference, and so I'll only further name Ryan Blair's technical management, and the inspiring stewardship of the WIFT-AT Board of Directors. For me, it was an unforgettable introduction to an organization, and it galvanized my commitment to realizing WIFT-AT's vision. The respect and appreciation I'd already had for the conference sponsors - without whom the show couldn't have gone on - was deepened and enriched, and I look forward to many more partnership opportunities to come.

Work continued with the Board on strategic discussions and supports for those, producing discussion drafts of key elements, as well as an auxiliary

decision-making model (to augment those in the bylaws) in order to ensure strong alignment on any new directions or significant changes to be proposed.

A number of systems improvements were realized or begun, notably in banking and information management. Others were added to an inventory for resourcing when possible, in particular standard operating procedures to aid succession while the organization relies upon short term contracts (without continuity). A mechanism was introduced for collaboratively assessing and supporting the quality of work experience in the organization.

We were able to secure additional support from Employment Nova Scotia for Rachel to more fully realize the information management improvements, and for Ellie to undertake a member engagement project during this period.

A variety of other initiatives underway when I joined the organization were continued and in some cases completed. The Mentor Match program, participating in Telefilm's Talent to Watch, supporting the continued strategic discussions of the board about WIFT-AT's purpose and value, and choosing a member to celebrate as Best Director in Screen Nova Scotia's awards were some of these.

Most recently, I've enjoyed supporting the accounting of our fiscal year-end, and planning this crucial gathering, the annual meeting of members.

Looking ahead, as the board returns to strategic planning, I expect to begin to see funding and development relationships or conversations to pursue. For WIFT-AT to realize its full potential as an association expanding gender representation and equity in the screen industry, support for longer-term plans will be required.

I'll close by reiterating how wonderful it is to be able to collaborate with this board, in order to serve this membership, and to invite you all, once again, to connect with me in whatever form is most convenient for you, to help me to do that!