

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Sundar Prize Celebrates Film, Culture and Emerging Voices in Delta as BC Youth Storyteller's Contest Deadline Approaches

Nine films, an Indigenous Elder's welcome, filmmaking workshops and community celebrations highlight the second annual Sundar Prize Luminaries BC Culture Days event. Young storytellers across British Columbia have until October 18 to submit their original film ideas for cash prizes and mentorship opportunities.

Delta, B.C. – October 8, 2026 – From powerful Indigenous storytelling and emerging Canadian filmmakers to a celebration of creativity, diversity and community, the second annual Sundar Prize Luminaries BC Culture Days event brought filmmakers, artists, youth and community members together at the North Delta Centre for the Arts on Sunday, October 4, 2026.

Now, the Sundar Prize Film Festival is turning that inspiration into an opportunity for the next generation of filmmakers, reminding young storytellers across British Columbia that the deadline for the **2026 BC Youth Storyteller's Contest is Sunday, October 18, 2026.**

Presented by the Sundar Prize Film Festival, an official project of Sher Pride, the free celebration featured nine film presentations, a filmmaking workshop, an interactive filmmaker and artist panel, red carpet interviews, community networking, Indigenous art prizes and opportunities for aspiring creators to connect directly with experienced industry professionals.

A Meaningful Celebration of Culture, Community and Storytelling

The celebration opened with a welcome and song from **Elder Mary Ruth Adams of Tsawwassen First Nation**. Her presence was especially meaningful as the Tsawwassen First Nation community continued mourning from a recent tragic loss.

Opening remarks followed from Sundar Prize Co-Founders Amar Sangha and Vinay Giridhar, Sher Pride President Annie Ohana, Sundar Prize Luminaries Manager Susan Ruzic and Moving Images Distribution Executive Director Karen Wong.

The afternoon's educational programming began with "How to Make Your First Film," a workshop led by two accomplished emerging filmmakers:

- **Hannah Yang**, Korean Canadian writer and director of "Red Light Rebel," winner of Best BC Short Film at the 2026 Sundar Prize Film Festival.
- **Shanthini Balasubramanian**, a Surrey-based Tamil filmmaker whose film "Velvet Secrets" earned her the 2025 KDocsFF Best Emerging Filmmaker Residency Award at the Sundar Prize Film Festival.

The workshop offered practical guidance on developing a story, finding collaborators, preparing for production, filming, post-production, navigating film festivals and distributing completed work.

Participants also enjoyed a complimentary lunch prepared by Preya of Honey Combz Catering, along with red carpet photographs, interviews and networking opportunities.

Nine Films Showcase the Diversity of Canadian Storytelling

The afternoon screening programme presented nine works spanning documentary, drama, comedy, animation, Indigenous storytelling, disability, queer experiences, migration, identity and community.

The programme featured:

1. "Chicken" by Lucy McNulty and Emma Pollard
2. "Red Light Rebel" by Hannah Yang
3. "Remnants" by Charleen Phelps and Sidartha Murjani
4. "Haru's New Year" by Alice Shin
5. "Burcu's Angels" by Özgün Gündüz
6. "It's Not You" by Tristan Garcia Ramos
7. "February Sixteenth Nineteen Forty Seven" by Jessica Miinguaqtii
8. "Wild Aerial" by Trixie Pacis
9. "I, Migrant" Official Epilogue Teaser by Vinay Giridhar

A special highlight was the world premiere presentation of **the official visual epilogue teaser from the forthcoming feature documentary "I, Migrant."**

Directed by Vinay Giridhar, the presentation featured poetry by acclaimed Punjabi poet Ajmer Rode and music and sitar by acclaimed musician Mohamed Assani. The artistic collaboration brought together poetry, music and cinema to explore themes of migration, belonging and cultural identity.

Following the screenings, Shanthini Balasubramanian moderated a filmmaker and artist panel featuring Amar Sangha, Jessica Miinguaqtii, Emma Pollard, Charleen Phelps, Medha Gautham, Vinay Giridhar, Trixie Pacis, Mohamed Assani and Ajmer Rode.

The discussion explored filmmaking, creative expression, representation, artistic collaboration and the personal experiences behind the stories presented. Audience members had opportunities to ask questions and connect directly with the participating artists.

Reflecting on the event's success and the festival's commitment to nurturing emerging talent, **Sidarta Murjani, Executive Director and Senior Programmer of the Sundar Prize Film Festival**, said:

"With a full house in attendance for our film screenings and having two young filmmakers, Shanthini and Hannah, leading the 'How to Make Your First Film' workshop, we are slowly creating capacity and opportunities for younger filmmakers and showcasing the range of stories BC filmmakers can tell."

Public officials in attendance included Delta City Councillor Dylan Kruger, Chair of the Delta School District, Joe Muego, as well as Vice Chair, Ammen Dhillon, and School Trustee, Val Windsor.

From Inspiration to Opportunity: BC Youth Storyteller's Contest Closes October 18

One of the celebration's most encouraging moments was the return of all three winners of the 2025 BC Youth Storyteller's Contest: **Kexin "Coco" Chen, Jane Ifunanya Diokpo and Wendy Shenglin Zhang**.

Their participation helped connect the accomplishments of last year's emerging storytellers with the opportunities available to this year's applicants.

During the event, Luminaries Manager Susan Ruzic invited Chen and Zhang to speak about their experience with the 2025 contest and encourage aspiring filmmakers to submit their ideas for the current 2026 contest. The two young storytellers also participated in a special door prize presentation, awarding a 2027 Cape Dorset Annual Inuit Art Calendar.

The contest, an initiative of the Sundar Prize Luminaries Program, welcomes original film ideas from **British Columbia residents aged 16 and older**.

Applicants do not need a completed film. Instead, they are invited to submit an original film treatment or project outline of no more than two pages, exploring a compelling social justice concept through their own creative vision.

Three filmmaker mentorship prizes will be awarded:

- **First Prize: \$300**
- **Second Prize: \$200**
- **Third Prize: \$100**

The contest offers opportunities for emerging creators to develop their ideas, gain recognition and connect with filmmaking mentorship and learning opportunities.

Amar Sangha, Co-Founder of the Sundar Prize Film Festival and Founder of Sher Pride, emphasized the importance of making filmmaking accessible to the next generation:

"Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. Far too many young people grow up believing that filmmaking is only for those with money, connections or access to the industry. We want to change that. Every young person deserves to know that their experiences matter, their voices deserve to be heard and their stories belong on screen. The next great filmmaker may be someone who has never picked up a camera. Through Sundar Prize Luminaries, we want to help open that first door and empower a new generation of storytellers to share their vision with the world."

The submission deadline is October 18, 2026. Winners will be announced in December 2026.

Full contest rules, submission forms and instructions are available at:

<https://sundarprize.com/storytellers-contest/>

Celebrating Indigenous Art and Community Partnerships

In addition to its educational and artistic programming, the celebration featured nine prizes, including works by Indigenous artists, books, a 2027 Cape Dorset Annual Inuit Art Calendar and a \$300 gift certificate for six private acting sessions, generously donated by Henry J. Mah of ACTg Vancouver.

The Indigenous art, books and calendar were sourced from Coastal Peoples Fine Arts Gallery in Vancouver's Gastown neighbourhood, which showcases the work of Pacific Northwest Coast Indigenous and Inuit artists.

The Sundar Prize team extends special appreciation to Svetlana of Coastal Peoples Fine Arts Gallery for helping select the prizes and introducing the team to the works and artists represented.

The event was supported by the **City of Delta, Moving Images Distribution, Delta Community Foundation, Boundless Lion Productions, ACTg Vancouver, Sunbelt Rentals Film & TV, Goodness Pictures Ltd., Steady Digital Marketing Support Services, Sher Pride and the Sundar Prize Film Festival.**

Special thanks also go to the North Delta Centre for the Arts, participating filmmakers, workshop presenters, panellists, volunteers, festival staff, sponsors, community partners and everyone who helped make the celebration possible.

Building the Next Generation of Filmmakers

The second annual Sundar Prize Luminaries BC Culture Days celebration demonstrated how community-based arts programming can create meaningful opportunities for emerging creators.

By combining professional development, film screenings, artistic exchange, mentorship and accessible public programming, the event connected established and emerging filmmakers while encouraging audiences to experience stories from diverse communities.

As the October 18 contest deadline approaches, Sundar Prize hopes that the inspiration generated during BC Culture Days will encourage more young British Columbians to transform their ideas into stories that deserve to be heard.

Watch the BC Culture Days 2026 Event Highlight Reel:

https://youtube.com/shorts/1Tz_7yK9tJw



BC Culture Days 2026 Event Photos Descriptions:



Photo 1: Karen Wong and Susan Ruzic address guests with their opening remarks from the stage during the Sundar Prize Luminaries BC Culture Days event at the North Delta Centre for the Arts. Photo credit: Bhavesh Chauhan



Photo 2: A strong audience turnout fills the theatre at the North Delta Centre for the Arts during the Sundar Prize Luminaries BC Culture Days 2026 event. Photo credit: Bhavesh Chauhan



Photo 3: Filmmakers and special guests take part in the closing panel discussion and audience Q&A, moderated by Shanthini Balasubramanian, at the North Delta Centre for the Arts during the Sundar Prize Luminaries BC Culture Days 2026 event. Seated from left to right are Amar Sangha, Jessica Miinguaqtii, Emma Pollard, Charleen Phelps, Medha Gautham, Vinay Giridhar, Trixie Pacis, Mohamed Assani and Ajmer Rode. Photo credit: Bhavesh Chauhan

Learn More About Sundar Prize Luminaries BC Culture Days:

<https://sundarprize.com/bc-culture-days/>

Submit to the 2026 BC Youth Storyteller's Contest by October 18:

<https://sundarprize.com/storytellers-contest/>

About the Sundar Prize Film Festival

The Sundar Prize Film Festival is an IMDb-qualifying Canadian film festival dedicated to creating social change through film. The festival celebrates compelling storytelling, diversity, inclusion and filmmakers whose work explores important social issues and human experiences.

Through its annual festival, Luminaries Program, filmmaker mentorship initiatives and community events, Sundar Prize provides opportunities for emerging and established filmmakers to connect with audiences and develop their creative careers.

The fourth annual Sundar Prize Film Festival will take place April 22 to 25, 2027.

Sundar Prize Film Festival is an official project of **Sher Pride**, a registered Canadian charity established in 2008.

Websites:

www.sundarprize.com

www.sherpride.ca

Media Contact

Amar Sangha

Co-Founder, Sundar Prize Film Festival

Founder, Sher Pride

Email: info@sherpride.ca

Website: www.sundarprize.com