



RAW Actor Studio x Soldiers In The Arts Film Lab Workshop

A two-day, hands-on workshop introducing Canadian veterans to the professional world of film production, creating pathways to creative careers while honouring their unique experiences and talents.

Program Overview

Immersive Experience

Veterans work alongside experienced union crew to create a 10-12 minute professional short film written by veteran Ryan Hawkyard.

Full Production Cycle

Participants engage in every stage from pre-production planning to post-production editing, gaining comprehensive industry knowledge.

Professional Outcomes

Veterans leave with a professionally produced short film, official IMDb credit, and festival-ready deliverables to launch their creative careers.

This initiative bridges military experience with creative industries, fostering artistic expression while building practical skills and industry connections that extend far beyond the workshop itself.

Our Mission



Bridging Military and Creative Worlds

We believe in the exceptional creative spirit within the Canadian veteran community. The discipline, teamwork, and problem-solving skills developed during military service have [enormous crossover potential](#) into the creative industries.

Our mission is to be that crucial bridge—helping veterans discover how their unique perspectives and abilities can create new opportunities, both personally and professionally, in film and television.

About Soldiers in the Arts (SITA)

Creative Development

SITA creates opportunities for veterans and their families to explore, develop, and fulfill their creative potential through collaboration with professional artists across all disciplines.

Career Pathways

We serve as a bridge to careers in film and television, with increasing focus on training veterans for roles behind the camera—from camera operation and sound to production design and editing.

Holistic Support

A dedicated wellness officer is available throughout all programming, ensuring participants receive mental health support while exploring their creative identities post-service.

Through SITA, veterans gain access to arts-based workshops, live performances, professional mentorship, and a network of peers who share lived experience—creating space for both healing and professional growth.



Workshop Benefits

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Build Confidence

Develop transferable creative skills in a supportive environment designed specifically for veterans.



Industry Mentorship

Receive guidance from working professionals who understand both creative and technical aspects of filmmaking.



Professional Network

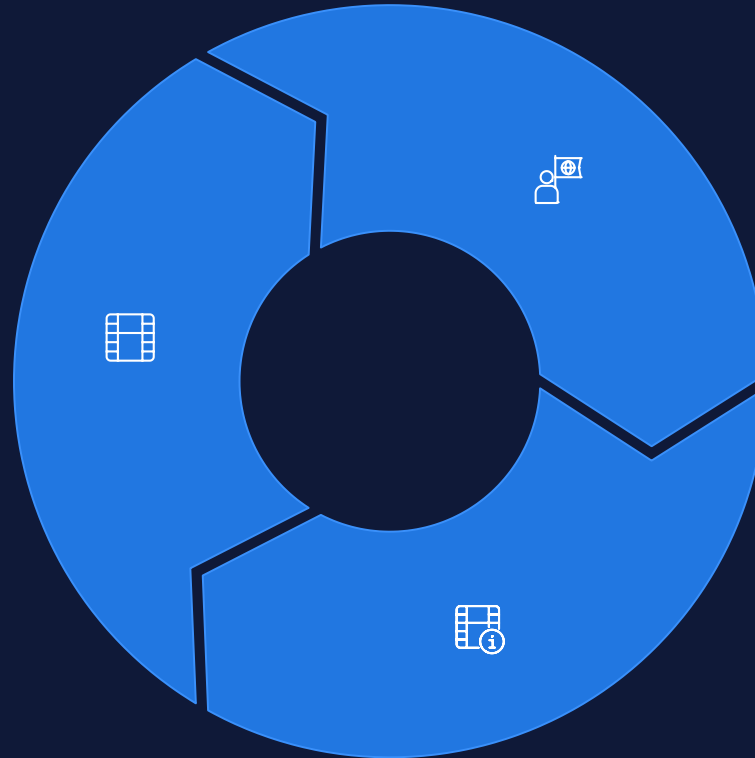
Establish relationships with active industry professionals that extend beyond the workshop.

Participants emerge with [tangible credentials](#) and a professional portfolio piece that can open doors throughout the Canadian film and television industry.

Target Film Festivals

International Festivals

TIFF (Toronto)
VIFF (Vancouver)
Whistler Film Festival



Canadian Showcases

Canadian Film Fest
KCFF (Kingston)
OFFA (Oakville)

Regional Festivals

Forest City Film Festival
Calgary International Film Festival
Fantasia Film Festival

The completed short film will be submitted to prestigious festivals across Canada and beyond, providing significant exposure for veteran filmmakers while raising awareness about the program's impact.



Leadership Team



Ryan Hawkyard

Project Coordinator – Soldiers in the Arts

Canadian Armed Forces veteran with 19 years of service and multiple deployments to Afghanistan. After medical release, Ryan discovered the transformative power of artistic expression. His lived experience with PTSD and OSI informs his passionate advocacy for arts as a pathway to healing and post-service reintegration.



Jennifer Grose

Producer | VP, Fund Development – Roland Gossage Foundation

With 15+ years in nonprofit and creative sectors, Jennifer has spearheaded numerous initiatives supporting Canadian veterans through arts and technology. As the driving force behind SITA, she has produced original works empowering veterans to share their stories, while building sustainable pathways to creative careers.

Creative Direction



Sophie Ann Rooney

Founder and Director of RAW Actor Studio

Award-winning director whose multidisciplinary work spans film, television, music, theatre, and video games. Her films have screened at over 20 international festivals, including the Whistler International Film Festival. Sophie brings extensive voice directing experience from Netflix productions and BAFTA-nominated games like *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*.



Grisha Pasternak

Head of Operations and Mentor of RAW Actor Studio

Multifaceted filmmaker and mentor with 16+ years of industry experience both in front of and behind the camera. A Toronto Metropolitan University film program alumnus, Grisha brings unique perspective to creating inclusive spaces for artistic exploration, blending his acting background with technical expertise.



Thomas Craig

Lead Actor & Veteran Mentor

Thomas Craig, acclaimed for his long-running role as Inspector Brackenreid on *Murdoch Mysteries*, will star as the lead in the short film and mentor participating veterans. With decades of film and television experience, he will provide professional insight, industry knowledge, and on-set guidance.



Workshop Budget Overview

1

Production Costs

- Professional equipment rental (cameras, lighting, sound)
- Location fees and permits
- Set design and wardrobe
- Transportation and catering for two full production days

2

Professional Support

- Union crew stipends
- Veteran participant stipends
- Dedicated mental health support throughout production
- Post-production editing and sound design

3

Festival & Distribution

- Film festival submission fees
- Marketing materials and press kits
- Digital distribution platform fees
- Premiere event expenses

Impact & Future Vision

Immediate Outcomes

- 10-12 minute professional short film
- 8-10 veterans trained in various production roles
- Established relationships with working industry professionals
- Tangible portfolio piece with festival potential

Long-Term Impact

- Career pathway development for participants
- Expansion of program to additional Canadian regions
- Creation of veteran-led production company
- Increased veteran representation in Canadian film and television



By supporting this initiative, you're not just funding a workshop—you're investing in a [transformative program](#) that bridges military experience with creative careers, building sustainable pathways that honor veterans' service while opening doors to new professional identities.

Donation Tiers

Your generous contribution directly supports the RAW Actor Studio x Soldiers In The Arts Film Lab Workshop, empowering veterans through creative film training. Choose a tier that aligns with your desired impact and recognition.

\$1,000 Tier

Unlimited Availability

- Tickets to the private premiere
- Set visit during filming
- Custom movie poster with your name as a thank you

\$5,000 Tier

4 Available

- Producer credit via IMDb
- Tickets to the private premiere & festival passes
- Set visit during filming
- Custom movie poster with highlighted production credit

\$10,000 Tier

2 Available

- Executive Producer credit via IMDb
- Tickets to the private premiere & festival passes
- Set visit during filming
- Custom movie poster with highlighted production credit
- Recognition for award nominations
- Guest background role in film with extra IMDb credit

Each tier offers unique opportunities to engage with the project and directly support veterans transitioning into the film and television industry. Join us in making a lasting impact!

Contact Us

We're excited to connect with you! For more information about the RAW Actor Studio x Soldiers In The Arts Film Lab Workshop, partnership opportunities, or how you can get involved, please reach out.

Email: info@rgf-sita.com

Website (Soldiers In The Arts): www.rgf-sita.comwww.soldiersinthearts.org

Website (RAW Actor Studio): www.rawactorstudio.com

Your support helps empower veterans through the transformative power of film.