

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

# *s-yéwuyáw* AWAKEN

a **TELUS** original

92 MINUTES  
CANADA  
DOCUMENTARY  
© 2023 ELDERS' FILM INC.





## TAGLINE / LOGLINE

***healing people, heals the land.  
healing the land, heals people.***

Stories of hope and homecoming intersect as Indigenous multimedia changemakers learn and document the teachings of their Elders.



## SYNOPSIS

**Ecko Aleck** of the Nlaka'pamux Nation (Lytton, BC,) **Alfonso Salinas** of the shíshálh Nation (Sunshine Coast, BC,) and **Charlene SanJenko** of Splatsin of the Secwépemc Nation (Shuswap, BC,) are learning and documenting the traditional cultural teachings and legacies of their Elders, including the impacts of genocide resulting from Canada's Indian Residential School (IRS) system. Calling the audience's attention to the filmmaking process of narrative collaboration between an Indigenous and settler team, this character-driven documentary connects the transformative stories of three Indigenous multimedia changemakers and their four Elders. Infused by Indigenous ceremony, ***s-yéwyáw: Awaken*** walks alongside the process of intergenerational healing.



# TEAM STATEMENT

**Relationships are central to our project. We acknowledge the importance of Indigenous peoples sharing Indigenous stories, and that their stories remain sovereign with the original keepers of those stories.**

*As parents and as Indigenous multimedia creators, we are deeply committed to healing, finding our voice and speaking our truth. We are sharing the stories of our Indigenous Elders with the world to amplify their knowledge and wisdom in collaboration with non-Indigenous allies. The teachings of our Indigenous Elders are needed now more than ever to navigate a changing world.*

**— Ecko Aleck, Alfonso Salinas, Charlene SanJenko**

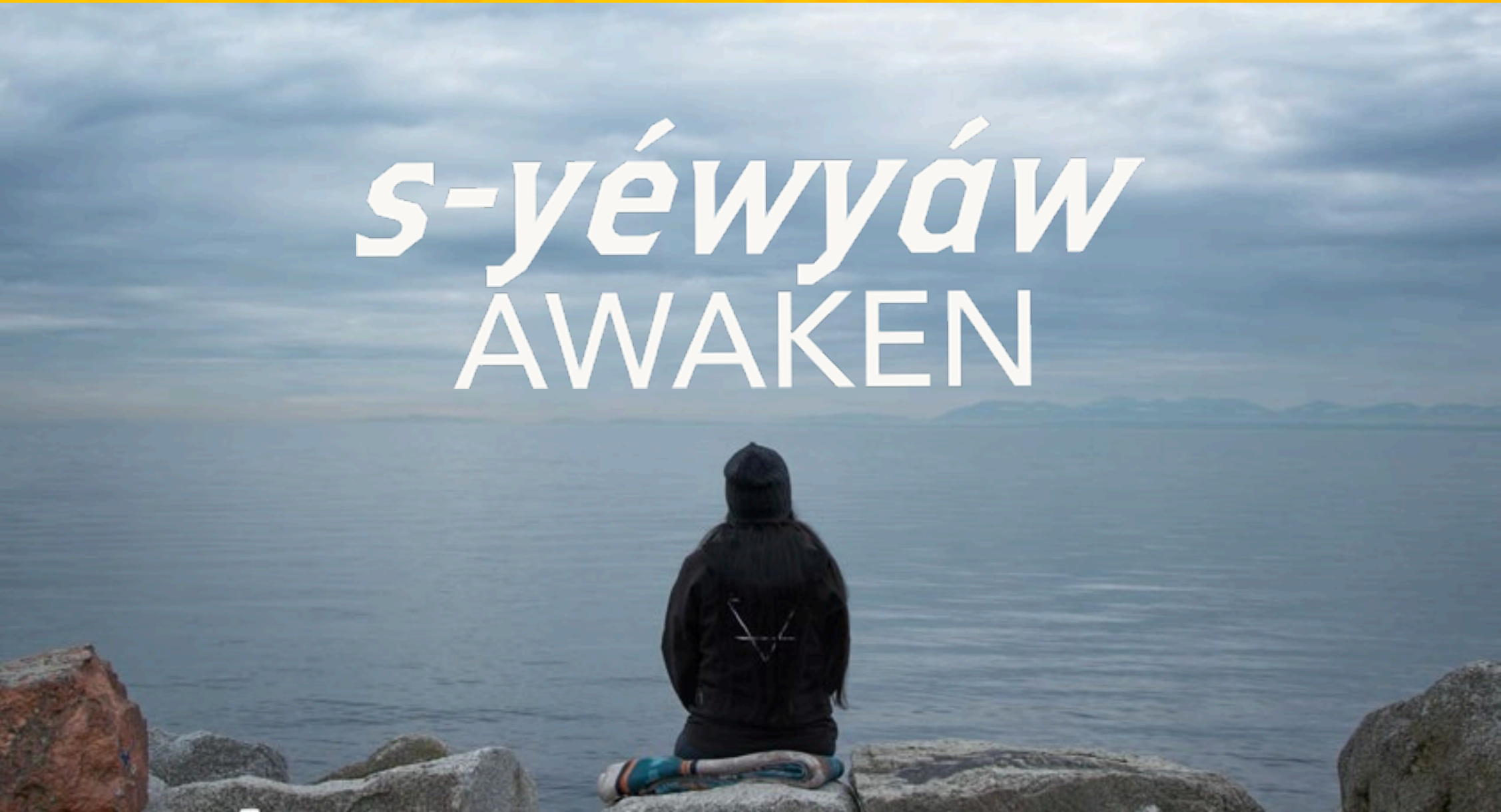
I humbly walk with this film as a settler director at the request of Indigenous friends, filmmakers and the communities who invited me to bear witness to their truths and healing journeys. Guided by Indigenous teachings to bring our whole selves to the work, this film has initiated a profound process of decolonization. I hope it will serve as a model for other Indigenous and non-Indigenous teams working together, toward personal and systemic change.

**— Liz Marshall**





# TRAILER / POSTER



TRAILER



POSTER



# PRODUCTION STILLS

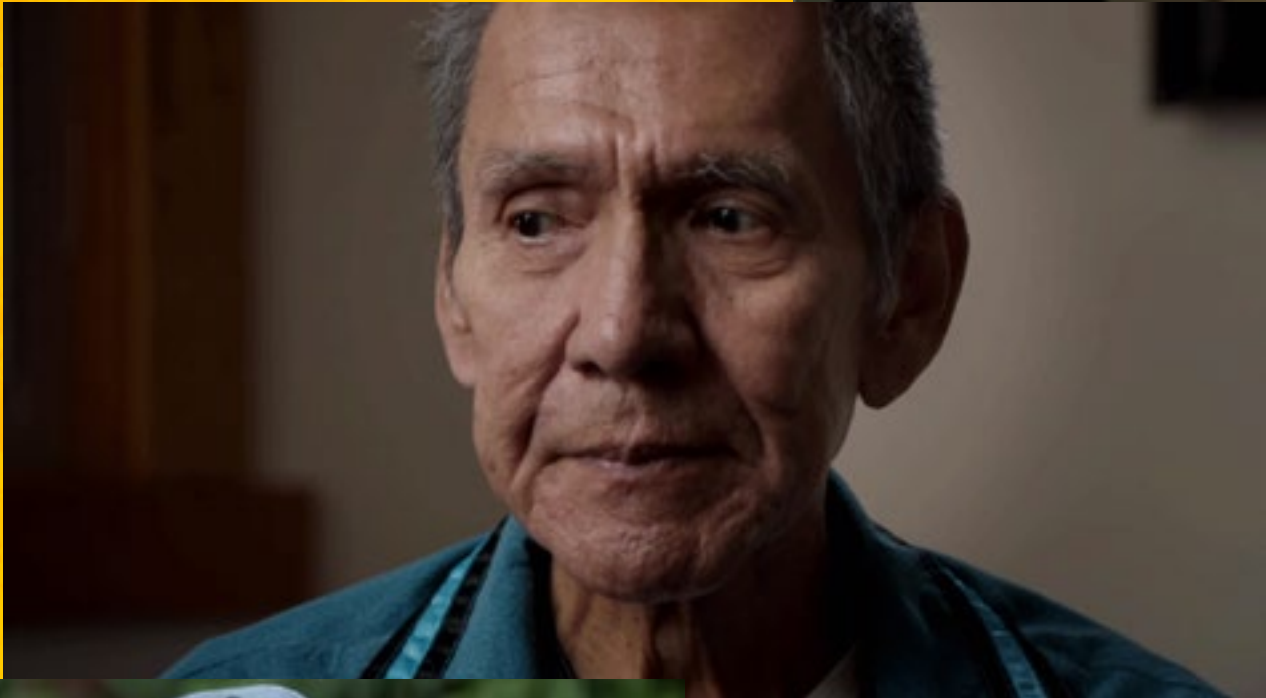
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# PROMOS

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The name of my canoe is the s-yewens lhems sila.



## FEATURED INDIGENOUS ELDERS



### **Sen7kiyap, Terry Coyote Aleck**

Originally from Lytton First Nation, Terry trained as a family and addictions counsellor. In 1987, he began his healing and training to conduct ceremonies as a sacred pipe carrier. Terry has received his learning from many Elders and medicine men and women. Through First Nations Teachings, he co-facilitates a men's group and drum-making workshops, leads drumming circles and sweat lodge ceremonies, and drums in schools on the Sunshine Coast. Terry was involved directly in bringing to light the personal and societal issues concerning the legacy of the Residential School System by reporting his abuser to the RCMP in 1987. Legal proceedings resulted in a landmark case to hold the government and church liable for sexual abuse in the 1960s and 70s. Clean and sober for 33 years, in all his endeavours, Terry works with gratitude, compassion, humility, humour, and "all my relations" in the spirit of healing. He is a well-respected bridge builder between Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations.

### **Wenecwtsin, Wayne Christian**

Of Secwepemc ancestry, Wayne M. Christian's Indian name, *Wenecwtsin*, is from his great grandfather, which means Big Voice that Speaks the Truth. A proud father of seven children and 27 grandchildren, *HisKukpi7* (Chief) Christian was elected at the age of 25 and served as Chief for over 40 years. He established healing and health systems for the Indigenous Nations of British Columbia and led two historic initiatives fighting for the recognition of Indigenous laws and jurisdictions for land, resources, and people. He is also known for his legacy work for children; the 1980 Indian Child Caravan and the 1980-1981 Constitution Express. *Wenecwtsin's* leadership philosophy is based on inclusiveness, spirituality, traditional knowledge rooted in oral history, and a strong belief that Sovereign land title and rights are governed by Indigenous laws, values, culture, traditions and connection with all of creation. "Whatever it takes, the time is now. We are the ones we have been waiting for."





## FEATURED INDIGENOUS ELDERS

### **hiwus, Calvin Craigan**

*hiwus* means "Chief", a name given to *hiwus* Calvin Craigan long before he stepped into his father's shoes as hereditary Chief in 1974, becoming the youngest elected Indigenous Chief in Canada at that time. Born into a long line of leaders, *hiwus* helped charter the *shíshálh* Nation's historic path toward self-governance in 1986, a legacy that bridged the gap between tradition and modernity. Decades later, *hiwus* served his Nation for another term while in his 70s. An oral knowledge keeper, Winter Spirit Dancer, and former political talk show host, Calvin Craigan has dedicated his life to bringing Indigenous issues to the forefront of public consciousness. His dream for his People is to live on the land like their ancestors did...with access to the internet!

### **xwu'p'a'lich, Barbara Higgins**

*xwu'p'a'lich* means "she weaves" which is what *xwu'p'a'lich* Barbara Higgins does as she crafts the narrative fabric of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom into published books and poems. As a child, *xwu'p'a'lich* was hidden by her family and not forced into the Residential School System. Barbara Higgins has dedicated her life to teaching the traditional ways of her ancestors, following her great-grandmother's guidance to live as a *shíshálh* Rememberer. After years of teaching adult education in the Northwest Territories, and fostering 27 children, she moved back to *ch'atlich* on the Sunshine Coast, where she is known and loved for her environmental activism as a protector of trees - the standing people. Barb urges us all to protect Mother Earth with reverence. "I've got no intention of being a rebel," she says, "I'm just me." She views everyone as "extended family," and encourages us all to paddle together. Barb's eleven-person canoe is named *S-yewens lhems Sila*, which means The Spirit of our Grandmothers.





## FEATURED TEAM



### **Kawayá7, Ecko Aleck**

Ecko is a Nlaka'pamux artist, founder and CEO, raised with the shíshálh Nation and currently living on Pentlatch (Qualicum) Nation lands. Ecko is a modern-day shape-shifter with digital arts, a storyteller through movement and a medicine woman of the heart. On her mission to support all people and the planet to return to a natural rhythm of well-being, Ecko has gathered a toolkit of knowledge that she carries forward into the ever-evolving transformation of her healing journey and her business, Sacred Matriarch Creative. Since the launch of SMC, she has won multiple awards for speaking dreams into existence.



### **Liz Marshall**

Working with diverse teams and communities, global funders and influencers, Canadian filmmaker Liz Marshall has written, directed, produced and filmed multiple impactful documentary projects around the globe since the 1990s. Motivated by the transformative language of film and television, her award-winning work is exhibited and reviewed widely. Feature length and broadcast titles include: s-yéwyáw / Awaken (2023) Meat the Future (2020) Midian Farm (2018) The Ghosts in Our Machine (2013) Water on the Table (2010.)



### **Kwamanchi, Alfonso Salinas**

Alfonso is a shíshálh Nation member and the Traditional Wellness Coordinator for the Nation. In his role, he creates programs to practice shíshálh traditions and opportunities for those who want to pass down their gifts. Alfonso received his drum from his grandfather in 2009 to become a song carrier. A graduate of the Indigenous Filmmaker program at Capilano University, Alfonso worked for the shíshálh communications department and produced the "Voices of shíshálh" TV series. Later, he became a guide in Stanley Park teaching visitors the history and traditions of Coast Salish people. Alfonso continues to document important events for the Nation today.



### **Charlene SanJenko**

Charlene is an Indigenous Storyteller, Impact Producer, and Media Visionary. Born in the Splotsin Band of the Shuswap Nation, Charlene believes in creating from a place of collective genius, celebrating cohesive partnerships that bring stories of hope and possibility alive. Charlene leads a team at reGEN media who is introducing a new approach to align progressive creative projects with strong brands with the intent of striking partnerships and investment to propel lasting success for all involved. She holds a solid reputation in the social impact space with a former corporate background in investment services, marketing & communications, and impact production.



# KEY FILM CREDITS

## **DIRECTED BY**

Liz Marshall

## **ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Özgün Gündüz

## **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

Liz Marshall

## **IMPACT PRODUCER**

Charlene SanJenko

## **ORIGINAL MUSIC BY**

Ecko Aleck

## **RE-RECORDING MIXER**

## **DIALOGUE EDITOR AND SOUND**

## **DESIGN**

Oscar Vargas

## **ADDITIONAL**

## **CINEMATOGRAPHY**

Michael Bourquin

Tamar Kozlov

## **WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY**

Ecko Aleck

Liz Marshall

Alfonso Salinas

Charlene SanJenko

## **LINE PRODUCER**

Patti Poskitt

## **EDITED BY**

Eddie O.

## **CINEMATOGRAPHY BY**

Eva Anandi Brownstein

Liz Marshall

Inder Nirwan

Diana Parry

## **DESIGNER**

Paul Shoebridge

## **LOCATION SOUND**

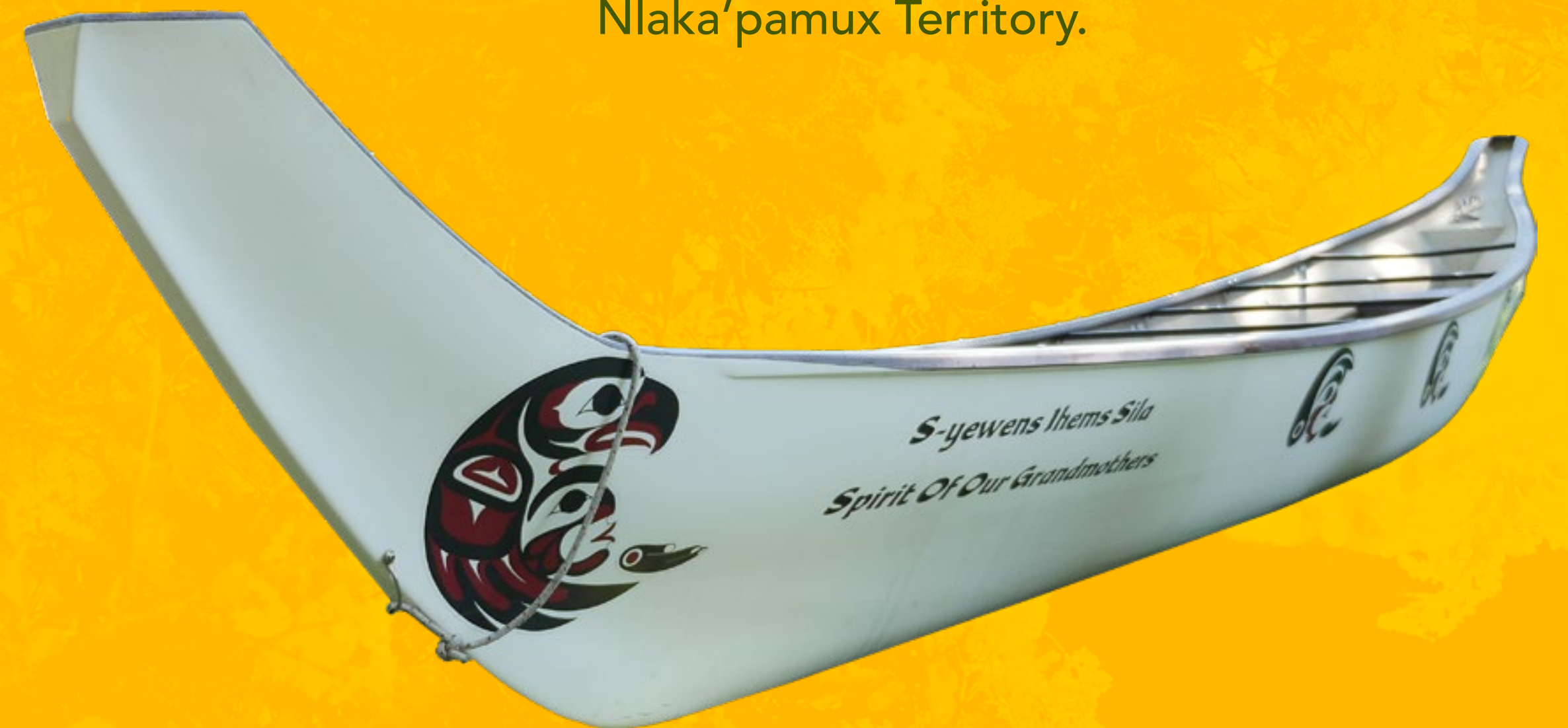
## **RECORDISTS**

Ramsay Bourquin

Sandor Gyurkovics

Oscar Vargas

Filmed respectfully on the unceded homelands  
of the shíshálh and sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Peoples;  
x̓w̓m̓əθk̓w̓əy̓əm and səliiwətał Territories;  
Splatsin te Secwepemcul'ecw;  
Qualicum First Nation;  
Nlaka'pamux Territory.





a **TELUS** original

ELDERS' FILM INC. PRESENTS *S-YÉWYÁW / AWAKEN*

PRODUCED BY **ECKO ALECK, LIZ MARSHALL, ALFONSO SALINAS, CHARLENE SANJENKO**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **LIZ MARSHALL** SENIOR PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE FOR TELUS **CHRISTINA WILLINGS**

LINE PRODUCER **PATTI POSKITT** ASSOCIATE PRODUCER **ÖZGÜN GÜNDÜZ** IMPACT PRODUCER **CHARLENE SANJENKO**

EDITED BY **EDDIE O** CINEMATOGRAPHY BY **EVA ANANDI BROWNSTEIN, LIZ MARSHALL, INDER NIRWAN, DIANA PARRY**

MUSIC COMPOSED BY **ECKO ALECK** SOUND EDITOR & RE-RECORDING MIXER **OSCAR VARGAS**

WRITTEN BY **ECKO ALECK, LIZ MARSHALL, ALFONSO SALINAS, CHARLENE SANJENKO**

DIRECTED BY **LIZ MARSHALL**

PRODUCED WITH THE SUPPORT OF **TELUS**

DEVELOPED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF **CREATIVE BC**

FUNDED IN PART BY THE **PROVINCE OF BC FILM INCENTIVE BC & THE CANADIAN FILM AND VIDEO PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT**

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH



**HOLLYWOODSUITE**

BRITISH  
COLUMBIA'S

**Knowledge  
Network:**



sacred matriarch  
creative





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TRAILER



POSTER



WEBSITE

**SYNOPSIS**  
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SYNOPSIS / BIOS



PRODUCTION STILLS



PROMOS



SOCIALS IMAGES



EXTERNAL LINKS