

Ottawa
International
Animation
Festival



Festival
international
d'animation
d'Ottawa

September 23 – 27, 2026

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Welcome 2026 OIAF Volunteers

Dear 2026 OIAF Volunteers,

On behalf of everyone at the Ottawa International Animation Festival, we would like to thank you for contributing your time and energy to support this year's celebration of animation!

This Festival is one-of-a-kind, attracting movie buffs, art lovers, and filmmakers from around the world together in one place, for one special event, once a year. An event of this scale would not be possible without the enthusiasm, commitment, and hard work of the volunteers who faithfully support the Festival every year.

This year is the 50th anniversary of our festival, so it's particularly meaningful to have our volunteer community come out to support us and celebrate this milestone together.

From all of us, we wish you a happy, safe, and memorable Festival!

Sincerely,
Your 2026 OIAF Team

About the Festival

From September 23–27, 2026, downtown Ottawa will once again be the stage where you can enjoy the world's most cutting-edge, thoughtful, funny, and provocative animation films while mingling with many of animation's most celebrated stars, studios, and characters.

For 50 years, the OIAF has attracted film and animation buffs, art lovers, and filmmakers from around the globe. You won't want to miss this year's exciting line-up of screenings, workshops, panels, and parties taking place at the Arts Court, ByTowne Cinema, Lowertown Brewery, National Arts Centre (NAC), Ottawa Art Gallery (OAG), National Gallery, and Strathcona Park.

Mandate

The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF) is a major activity of the Canadian Film Institute (CFI) that works to foster the development and growth of local, regional, and national animation talent.

The CFI's mission is to encourage and promote the production, diffusion, study, appreciation and use of moving images for cultural and educational purposes in Canada and abroad. The CFI is a unique institution that organizes ongoing public film programming and artist talks, provides educational enhancements on its websites, and publishes books and monographs on various aspects of Canadian and international cinema.

Founded in 1976, OIAF attracts audiences and filmmakers from across Canada and around the world. The OIAF reaches out to its audience with surveys and uses community advisors to help get ideas to enrich Festival programming. Finally, the OIAF is a unique and accessible space that fosters public appreciation for the art and craft of animation.

Your Commitment to OIAF

As an OIAF volunteer, you represent the largest animation festival of its kind in North America! We are counting on you to be responsible and organized.

To ensure that you and your fellow volunteers have the best experience possible, we ask that you follow all of the guidelines laid out in our Volunteer Resources, found on our [volunteer page](#).

OIAF is dedicated to providing a supportive, non-threatening, and harassment-free environment. As such, OIAF does not tolerate offensive and harmful behaviour of participants. This includes:

- any form of verbal or physical abuse;
- the use of derogatory or discriminatory language, gestures or actions; and,
- any form of harassment, racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, or any other targeted actions which are intended to cause personal harm to OIAF volunteers, attendees, and participants.

NOTE: Should you fail to meet the volunteer requirements and expectations outlined in our Volunteer Resources, your pass will be revoked and your performance and behaviour could affect your future eligibility with our volunteer program.

Accessibility

There are a number of volunteer positions suitable for volunteers who may have accessibility requirements and we are happy to help you find the best fit. Additionally, all 2026 OIAF venues are wheelchair-accessible and have accessible washroom facilities.

In order to provide clear, consistent messaging in our volunteer resources, we've used plain language wherever possible to ensure that all volunteers understand what is expected of them.

If you would like more details about our Accessibility policy, please review them here: <https://www.animationfestival.ca/accessibility/>.

Our Volunteer Code of Conduct

To help us ensure a safe volunteer experience for everyone, volunteers with the Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF) are expected to read, agree to, and follow all guidelines provided in our volunteer resources, which can be found on our website, <https://www.animationfestival.ca/volunteer/>. Failure to follow these guidelines may lead to your dismissal and could also prevent you from volunteering with any of our events going forward.

If you require any clarification, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@animationfestival.ca.

Please remember that while you are onsite, you are a representative of the OIAF; we ask that your words, decisions, and actions reflect that accordingly. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, and we look forward to working with you to create the very best festival experience for everybody.

As a volunteer with the Ottawa International Animation Festival, I agree to conduct myself in a professional manner while representing the festival. This means I will:

- Show up on time for my shifts and report to my assigned location;
- Contact the Festival Office as soon as possible if I am unable to attend my shift;
- Review all Volunteer Resources (including role-specific details) and ask any questions I may have before my first shift;
- Complete any required training before my first shift and show up onsite prepared for my role;

- Maintain a friendly and professional demeanour while onsite;
- Follow directions with a positive attitude;
- Ask for help or clarification about instructions or tasks promptly;
- Dress appropriately for the role that I am in, including wearing my volunteer t-shirt and festival pass, and meeting any other standards of dress specific to my role; and,
- Stay focused on my tasks, avoid distractions (e.g. unnecessary cell phone use), and avoid self-promotion while on shift.

As a volunteer with the Ottawa International Animation Festival, I agree to, at all times, make choices that help prioritize and maintain a safe environment for myself and my fellow volunteers. This means I will:

- Report any potentially unsafe or dangerous situations to my Venue Manager or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as I become aware of them;
- Communicate with all guests, OIAF volunteers, and staff respectfully, and refrain from making any inappropriate requests;
- Refrain from consuming any substances before or during my shift that could impair my abilities or judgment; and,
- Stay home if I am sick and unable to work without putting others at risk.

I understand that some harmful behaviours may result in my immediate dismissal, being prevented from volunteering with OIAF in the future, and in some cases, criminal liability. I agree to refrain from all of these behaviours, including:

- Sharing my volunteer pass;
- Inappropriate use or disclosure of either private volunteer information or confidential festival information that my role may give me access to;
- Insubordination;
- Theft;
- Consumption or distribution of illegal drugs or cannabis to anyone, or distribution of alcohol to minors;
- Unauthorized recordings of any kind, including capturing audio or video during festival screenings or presentations;
- Harassment in any form;
- Bullying, aggression, violent behaviour or threats of violence, whether in-person or virtually; and,
- Any other behaviour that may be deemed inappropriate by OIAF.

While our aim is to provide transparency with our volunteer policies, we reserve the right not to discuss the details of a dismissal with the volunteer in question.

Volunteer Resources & Trainings

In order to ensure that you're as prepared as possible for the task before you, we've provided a number of resources to help get you up to speed:

- **Volunteer Positions Guide:**

- Your first point of information for our volunteer roles
- Each volunteer and leadership position is listed and includes:
 - the Responsibilities, Requirements, and Assets for that position
 - if it has festival, pre-festival and/or post-festival shifts
 - any relevant Notes that may help you determine if it's a good fit
- Before submitting your volunteer application, make sure to review the details of each role that you choose

- **Volunteer Handbook:**

- Your go-to resource to get you ready for the festival, the handbook has a lot of need-to-know information, including:
 - our expectations for you
 - how to prepare for your first shift
 - what to do if you can't attend a scheduled shift
 - what you can access with your volunteer pass
 - much, much more!

- **Volunteer Orientation:**

- Held in the lead-up to the festival, the orientation session is an optional (but ideal) opportunity to pick up your volunteer pass and t-shirt, eat some pizza, meet some of your fellow volunteers and get some pre-festival training
- An email will be sent out closer to the festival with all of the orientation details

- **AccessForward Customer Service Standard:**

- A free, online training module that is mandatory for all employees or volunteers who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization

- **Additional supplementary information (role-specific):**

- Some of our volunteer roles have additional, role-specific information that our volunteers will need to know to ensure their shifts go smoothly
- This information will be provided to you prior to the festival
- Make sure to review the information thoroughly before your shift!

Your Volunteer Pass

Volunteering for at least two shifts means that you're eligible for a Volunteer Pass. This pass will grant you access to OIAF screenings, talks, the Exposé Fair, and any parties (provided there's still space).

For events with limited space, priority is given to festival-goers and volunteer admission is not guaranteed. In some cases, volunteers may be asked to wait until 5 minutes before the start time and, occasionally, those who have waited will not be able to attend due to venue capacity (this is primarily for events at the Arts Court Theatre).

NOTES:

- To receive a Volunteer Pass, you must do the following two things:
 - Upload a photo of yourself for identification purposes:
 - This can be done using the Volunteer Application Form found on the OIAF volunteer website
 - Create an account in [OIAF's Eventival portal](#)
 - If you're a returning volunteer and you've already created one, you can use your previous log-in information

Volunteer Pass FAQs

Where do I go to pick up my pass?

Volunteer passes can be picked up:

- during our OIAF Volunteer Orientation
- from the Festival Office (starting the Saturday before the festival)

Do I need anything to pick up my pass?

Yes, you will need to bring a photo ID and you'll need to sign for it.

Does the pass give me access to parties?

Yes, your pass will give you access to parties, but please note:

- Festival passholders will receive priority access, so we recommend that volunteers arrive one hour after the party has started
- The opening night party can only be attended by volunteers 19 years of age or older, and Photo ID is required

Is there anything my pass does NOT give me access to?

Yes, your volunteer pass does NOT give you access to TAC or the Animators' Picnic (unless you're scheduled for a shift). Those events are for specific passholders only.

Shift Preparation

Once you've submitted your volunteer application, been scheduled for shifts, and (hopefully) attended orientation, it's time to start preparing for your first shift. Below, we've highlighted some of the best ways to get ready before getting onsite.

- **Complete your Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Training before your first shift:**
 - In order to provide top-tier service to our festival-goers, make sure to complete the training which can be found [here](#)
 - Don't forget to update your volunteer application Accessibility question to "Yes, I have completed the training"
- **Double-check your schedule and review the requirements of the position:**
 - Make sure you know the expectations of your role before getting onsite, especially if you're scheduled for more than one
- **Review the 2026 OIAF Online Program Guide:**
 - An invaluable resource, the [program guide](#) not only helps you direct festival-goers efficiently, it also helps you know where you need to go to use your Festival Pass!
- **Know the venues**
 - Knowing what events and screenings are happening when is only part of the equation
 - Make sure you also know which smaller venues are [inside](#) our main venues so that you know where you're going AND how you can best help festival-goers get to where they need to be
- **Review all volunteer resources including any supplementary documents that your role may require (certain teams only)**
 - Some roles will have additional information outside of the standard volunteer resources that everyone is required to review
 - Make sure to review all the information before you get onsite

You OTTa Know – Shift Checklist

Whether you're a new or returning volunteer, or this is your first shift of the season or the last, make sure to use this checklist so you don't forget anything as you head over to the festival.

☐ **Bring your Volunteer Pass and T-shirt:** You need both for every shift that you're working, so don't forget 'em!

☐ **Check your schedule:** For those volunteers who are working multiple roles, make sure you know what role you're working each day.

☐ **Plan your trip:** Plan to arrive 15 minutes early and never be afraid to double-check the address of where you need to be

☐ **Dress appropriately for your shift:** If you have your OIAF volunteer tee and pass, you're starting off on the right foot. After that, dress pants, skirts, and jeans are all acceptable for most events, with these notable exceptions:

- **TAC:** All volunteers scheduled for TAC events are expected to dress in business casual + their volunteer t-shirts
- **Wrecking Crew:** Closed-toe, non-slip shoes are recommended for all Wrecking Crew shifts
- **Animators' Picnic:** The picnic is happening rain-or-shine, so all Picnic volunteers should review the weather report carefully that day and dress accordingly; we also recommend closed-toe shoes for this event.

☐ **Pack light:** We cannot guarantee onsite storage and we are not responsible for lost or stolen items. Plan ahead before your shift, bring only what you need, and make sure it fits in a small backpack or fanny pack.

☐ **Bring a water bottle (and a snack!):** Once your shift starts, you're going to be busy and it's difficult to grab something while you're on-duty. We strongly recommend bringing a non-alcoholic beverage and some snacks for your shift.

- Volunteers working a double shift will get a chance to grab some food (but snacks are never a bad idea!)

☐ **Take care of yourself:** Don't forget to bring any medications you may need while on-shift (in their original packaging)

☐ **Track your hours daily:** If you need to track your hours for high school or anything else, bring a paper sign-off sheet to every shift and get your Supervisor to sign-off daily.

☐ **Know who to report to:** Who you report to depends on your role. Check out the table, "What, Where, Who: Where to meet and who to report to when you get onsite" on the next page to find out who you report to.

☐ **Let us know if you can't make it:** Things happen and you may not always be able to show up when you said you would. If this happens, let us know as soon as possible; email your Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@animationfestival.ca.

What, Where, Who:
Where to meet and who to report to when you get onsite

TEAM	MEETING LOCATION	REPORT TO
50/50 Raffle Crew	Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Coordinator
Airport Greeter	Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Coordinator
Aniboutique Shopkeeper	Arts Court Hub, 3 rd floor	Aniboutique Manager
Animation Exposé	Box Office	Team Lead
Animators' Picnic	Strathcona Park	Special Events Coordinator
Chez Ani Café	Arts Court Studio	Team Lead
Delegate Bag Stuffer	Festival Office	Volunteer Coordinator
Driver's Helper	Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Coordinator
Festival General Helper	Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Coordinator
Festival Reception – Pass Pickup	Elevator B – 3 rd Floor Studio	Box Office Assistant
Floating Crew	Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Coordinator
Information Crew	Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Coordinator
Party Crew	Various party locations	Special Events Coordinator
Photo Processor	Festival Office	Communications Manager
Photographer	Festival Office	Communications Manager
Post-Festival Clean-Up	Festival Office	Volunteer Coordinator
Pre-Festival General Helper	Festival Office	Volunteer Coordinator
Screenings & Talks	Various locations	Venue Manager
TAC Volunteer	National Arts Centre	Programming Manager
Workshop Assistant	National Gallery	Outreach Coordinator
Wrecking Crew	Volunteer Hub	Volunteer Coordinator

Festival Venues

Our seven main 2026 venues can be found on the next page along with details, such as:

- addresses
- what nearby landmarks can help you identify them
- what smaller venues they house within
- what events and activities can be found there.

For more specific venue details, including a venue description, wheelchair access details, and details about the bathrooms available inside (e.g. gendered or inclusive), please check out our website page, [While You're Here](#).

VENUES	ADDRESS & LANDMARKS	WHAT'S GOING ON
Arts Court • OIAF Office • Theatre • Studio • Club SAW • Micaela Fitch Boardroom	2 Daly Ave. @ Nicholas / Daly • East entrance of the Rideau Centre • Across the street from the Novotel Hotel	• Pass Pick-up & Reception • Aniboutique • Chez Ani Café • Volunteer Hub • Salon des Refusés • Friday Night Party
Ottawa Art Gallery (OAG) • Alma Duncan Salon • Studio • Jackson Café	10 Daly Ave. @ Nicholas / Waller • Le Germain Hotel • Across the street from the Les Suites Hotel	• Screenings in Alma Duncan • All-Ages @ OIAF • Youth Outreach
National Arts Centre (NAC) • Babs Asper Theatre Coat Check • The O'Born Room • Rossy Pavilion • Lantern Room	1 Elgin St. @ Elgin / Queen • War Monument and Sparks St. • Across from the Westin Hotel & Rideau Canel	• TAC Registration Desk • Animation Exposé • The Animation Conference (TAC) • NightOwl Party • Festival Awards Ceremony
ByTowne Cinema	325 Rideau St. @ Rideau / Nelson • King Edward Ave. • Loblaws on Rideau	• OIAF Screenings • Opening Night Ceremony • Competition Galas • Delicious popcorn!
National Gallery	380 Sussex Dr. • Look for the giant spider, aka Maman!	• OIAF Screenings • Teen Day
Strathcona Park	25 Range Rd. @ Range / Laurier • Le Cordon Bleu • Rideau River • Russian Embassy • Large fountain (which is the bus shuttle stop)	• OIAF's annual Animators' Picnic • Pumpkin-carving contest
Lowertown Brewery	73 York St., near Dalhousie • in the heart of the Byward Market • between Tucker's Marketplace and The Keg • 8-minute walk from Arts Court	• OIAF's annual Opening Night Party

About the 2026 OIAF Poster Artist

Who designed the festival poster?

Seth is a cartoonist, designer and collector. His books include *Wimbledon Green*, *George Sprott*, and *It's a Good Life if you Don't Weaken*. He was the designer for *The Complete Peanuts*, *The Collected Doug Wright* and *The New World-Comics from Mauritania*. He is the subject of the award-winning NFB documentary *Seth's Dominion* and was the winner, in 2011, of the prestigious Harbourfront prize. After 20 years of serialization his graphic novel, *Clyde Fans*, was published in 2019 and went on to be the first graphic novel ever nominated for the Giller Prize.

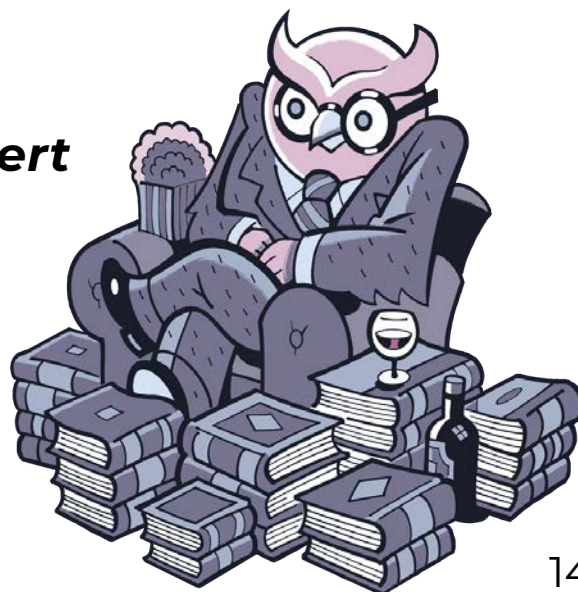
In 2021, his bronze sculpture arrangement, *Living Room Suite*, was installed in front of the Art Gallery of Guelph. In 2022, Seth was honoured by the French government as a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. He is currently working on a new long graphic novel which will appear in the years to come.

He lives in Guelph, Ontario, with his beloved wife Tania.

From the Artist:

When I was asked to draw the poster for the Ottawa International Animation Festival, I was only given one requirement. It must have an owl in it. That was fine with me. I like owls. They are a great classic cartoon image. Immediately, I settled on a typical bookish, tweedy owl. The go-to owl. I suppose I could have gone against type and done, say, a skinny little punk-rock owl, but who am I kidding? It was always going to be this frumpy old owl. That's my sensibility. Out of nowhere, a nerdish frog appeared to run the film projector. No names were requested for these characters yet, "Owlbert" and "Frogworth" found their way into my brain. I assume they have a kind of Siskel and Ebert sort of relationship (aha—thus the "Bert" part of the name).

Owlbert

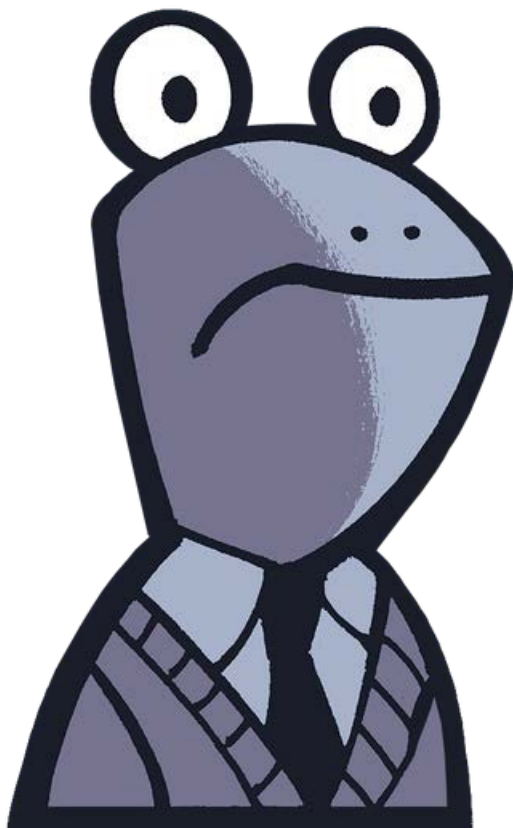


When I turned in the drawing, my good friend Luc Chamberland (animator and director) asked me why I had surrounded Owlbert with books instead of film canisters. It was a good point. Though, to be honest, it never even occurred to me. Owls are wise. Owls read books. If I had a screening room, it would be full of books. In this case, surely they are books about animation!

Graphic novelists and animators are related, but they come from very different branches of the cartooning family. My medium is all about stillness, and animation is all about movement. It is an interesting difference. When I first saw some of my work animated, I was amazed to fully realize how utterly apart these two branches are. It was a good experience for someone like myself who genuinely loves animation and thinks they understand it... but perhaps is kidding himself. I have the deepest respect for the noble calling of animation in all its various forms, and it is a lovely honour to draw this year's poster.

Good luck to all the nominees.

Seth
Palookaville, 2026



Frogworth

Post-Festival Volunteer Survey

We want to know what you think!

We want our volunteers to have the best experience possible and, to do that, we'll be conducting volunteer surveys during and after the festival. To help us enhance the quality of our volunteer program, we want to know all about your experiences this festival season.

All surveys are anonymous and optional, and we appreciate any feedback that you may have. We encourage you to share your voice to help improve all future volunteer experiences.

Thank you in advance for your help!

Contact Information

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, before or after your shift, feel free to reach out!

HOW TO REACH THE FESTIVAL OFFICE

Address:

2 Daly Ave
Suite A222
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6E2

Phone:

613-232-8769

Website:

www.animationfestival.ca

Register to volunteer:

www.animationfestival.ca/volunteer/

HOW TO REACH THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Email

volunteer@animationfestival.ca

Phone

(289) 432-1110