

Female Creators that Made Great Canadian TV in 2019

[Bridget Liszewski](#)



Every year more and more television series are getting made, which means more creators, writers, and directors are getting their shot to make an impact and be heard. With more streaming channels and platforms entering the game all the time, the television industry shows absolutely no signs of slowing down. One of the best things about that is that more women and more diverse voices are getting a chance to jump in and tell stories than ever before. Here at *The TV Junkies*, there's no better time than the end of the year to look back and celebrate the women who are seizing opportunities and using their voices to tell stories.

In Canada, female creators once again had a very busy year. Though the television industry is much smaller than its U.S. counterpart, plenty of women still got the chance to create and lead series. As we start to look back on the year that was, we saw this as the perfect opportunity to shine a light on the talented women who are out there making television in the Great White North.

Michelle Lovretta



Credits: Creator of SYFY/Space's *Killjoys*

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: As much as we still try to tell ourselves it isn't true, *Killjoys* ended its five season run earlier this year. Lovretta stepped down and turned the showrunning duties over to Adam Barken in Seasons 4 and 5, but it was clear to anyone who watched, just how much her voice remained in the story that unfolded for Dutch (Hannah John-Kamen) and the rest of Team Awesome Force. In fact, Lovretta wrote three of the final season's 10 episodes, including the absolute stellar series finale, "Last Dance." Lovretta and her team not only answered so many questions in the final season, but also left audiences with a real, true, and happy sense of closure. Over the last five years, it is hard to find a show on TV more diverse, and while we had to say goodbye, we're forever [grateful](#) for knowing the world Lovretta portrayed in *Killjoys*.

Moira Walley-Beckett



Credits: Showrunner of CBC's *Anne with an E*

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: While the year didn't end the way the former *Breaking Bad* writer may have wanted, with the "Anne of Green Gables" adaptation being cancelled after three seasons, the show did succeed in many areas that should make Walley-Beckett very proud. After introducing multiple queer characters in Season 2, Walley-Beckett continued to make the world of Avonlea even more inclusive in Season 3 by ushering in several Indigenous characters. Not only did Anne's world become bigger and more diverse as she turned 16, but Walley-Beckett once again led up an all-female writing team, and the series won Best Drama at the Canadian Screen Awards. So while Anne's story has come to an end, Walley-Beckett ensured that over three seasons viewers were treated to a fierce young protagonist who always looked to expand her world and see beyond the horizon.

Aurora Browne / Meredith MacNeill / Carolyn Taylor / Jennifer Whalen



Credits: Creators and stars of CBC's *Baroness Von Sketch Show*

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: The CBC and IFC sketch comedy series returned for Season 4 and featured sketches more perceptive than ever before. The series remained a fast-paced showcase for women over 40 in a way that is unparalleled by the rest of television. These four women write, star, and executive produce the series and no subject matter is off limits. Oh, and there's no need to worry about the show going anywhere any time soon because filming on Season 5 is already underway!

Jennica Harper and Leah Gauthier



Credits: Harper is executive producer and showrunner of *JANN*. Gauthier is co-creator, executive producer, and writer of *JANN*.

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: Harper and Gauthier teamed up to bring viewers the most-watched Canadian comedy series of the 2018-19 broadcast year. *JANN* stars award-winning Canadian singer, songwriter, and all around legend, Jann Arden as a fictionalized version of herself. Set and filmed in Calgary, the series proved Arden to be a very talented actress not afraid of conquering any outlandish scenario that Harper, Gauthier, and the *JANN* writers may throw her way. In just six episodes in Season 1, *JANN* not only provided viewers with tons of laughs, but that also didn't shy away from serious issues such as sexuality, memory loss from possible Alzheimer's disease, and surprise pregnancy.

Morwyn Brebner and Adrienne Mitchell



Credits: Brebner is creator, executive producer, and showrunner of *Coroner*. Mitchell is lead director and executive producer of *Coroner*

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: Brebner and Mitchell joined forces on the CBC drama series, starring Serinda Swan as Dr. Jenny Cooper, as she strives to speak for the dead in her new role as coroner. *Coroner* consistently strove to be much more than a standard procedural, instead focusing in on its characters and their struggles. The series also provided a much needed, and strikingly realistic, look at Jenny's struggles with mental health and anxiety. Another important aspect of *Coroner* was the [priority](#) put on diversity by both Brebner and Mitchell. Not only does *Coroner* work hard on casting diversely on screen, but the priority trickles down to the show's writing staff and directors as well. Brebner and Mitchell's formula for creating television spoke for itself, as *Coroner* was the #1 new English-language Canadian series of

the season.

Tassie Cameron and Marsha Greene



Credits: Cameron was executive producer and co-showrunner of *Mary Kills People*. Greene was executive producer and co-showrunner of Season 3 of *Mary Kills People*.

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: Taking over for series creator Tara Armstrong, Greene joined Cameron to deliver the final chapter of the Global drama series. After writing on the first two seasons, Greene was promoted to co-showrunner alongside Cameron, and the pair revealed the fate of the show's titular angel of death, Dr. Mary Harris (Caroline Dhavernas). With the stakes higher than ever before, especially when it came to Mary's personal life, Cameron and Greene kept the focus on the series' characters, putting more heart than ever before behind the stories *Mary Kills People*

was telling, and giving viewers a satisfying end to a spectacular series.

Catherine Reitman



Credits: Creator, executive producer, director and star of CBC's *Workin' Moms*.

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV:

After the shocking breakdown in her marriage, Reitman's Kate was forced to deal with the fallout in Season 3 of her CBC comedy series. And oh what a fallout it was! In its own patented *Workin' Moms* way, Kate didn't deal with her husband cheating on her in the best possible ways. She was messy and did some questionable things in its wake, but stayed true to Reitman and Co.'s characters that always feel real and relatable. Reitman was even busier behind the scenes, as she made a deal to bring *Workin' Moms* to a

worldwide audience as a Netflix original. The series was also once again nominated for Best Comedy at the International Emmy Awards.

Michelle Ricci and Carol Hay



Credits: Co-creators of CBC's *Frankie Drake Mysteries*

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: With its four lead women in tow, the CBC series about a fictional detective in 1920s Toronto returned this year for Season 3. While Lauren Lee Smith solves cases each week as Frankie, she is always joined with her partner Trudy (Chantel Riley), officer Mary (Rebecca Liddiard) and coroner Flo (Sharron Matthews). The independent-minded women continued to go against gender norms set for them as they solve crimes the police overlook. This season also saw the drama travel overseas to England and welcomed likes of Agatha Christie. Perhaps most importantly though, the series keeps striving to display

Toronto for the multicultural hub that it always has been with stories exploring Trudy's blackness, having Frankie's favorite hangout be a Chinese speakeasy, and sparking discussions on topics like racism thanks to the case of the week.

Heather Conkie



Credits: Showrunner of CBC's *Heartland*

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: *Heartland* became Canada's longest-running one-hour scripted drama series back in 2015, and showed no signs of stopping with its 13th season premiere this September. Conkie is the showrunner of the family drama series that has well over 200 episodes, and follows the ups and downs of a family who owns a horse ranch. Shot in beautiful Calgary, the drama is one that can truly be enjoyed by the whole family. It's also found an impressive following thanks to Netflix, and now plays in 119 countries around the world.

Sherry White



Credits: Showrunner, executive producer and director of CBC's *Little Dog*

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: White continued to wear many hats during the second season of the CBC comedy series that follows boxer Tommy "Little Dog" Ross (Joel Thomas Hynes) on his quest for redemption. She once again served as showrunner and executive producer. In addition to directing some episodes herself, White was also behind the decision to have all female directors in Season 2, as the series continued to bring a feminine lens to a traditionally very masculine world. Shot in and featuring White and Hynes' Newfoundland roots, she helped create a pocket of the world that was filled with unique and fun characters that despite some questionable choices, still figured out a way to charm their way right into your heart.

Karen Knox and Gwenlyn Cumyn



Credits: Creators and stars of KindaTV's *Barbelle*. Writers of KindaTV's *Falconette*.

2019 Contributions to Canadian TV: After another successful Kickstarter campaign, creative partners Knox and Cumyn brought the KindaTV web series back for a second season in 2019. The pair once again starred as girlfriends and bandmates, Veronica and Alice, who work to keep their newly reconciled relationship out of the public eye as they head out on tour. *BARBELLE* brings positive queer representation to the forefront, as well as delivers great musical performances and catchy pop tunes that instantly get stuck in viewers' head. Perhaps most importantly, by being on KindaTV, and not beholden to any network, Knox and Cumyn were able to explore sensitive and important subject matter such as struggles with sobriety, and looking at #MeToo through a [queer lens](#). While on the surface *BARBELLE* looks like any

other fun digital series, Knox and Cumyn continued to prove that real, relatable, and multi-layered characters and stories do sometimes come wrapped with fun, catchy pop songs. In addition to *BARBELLE*, Knox and Cumyn wrote the new resistance-themed prequel series *Falconette* for KindaTV as well.

Who are your favorite creators in Canadian television? Sound off about them in the comments below!



[by](#)

Wynonna Earp SDCC 2018

Interviews: WayHaught, Wynonna's Soulmate and More Insights from the Cast