



SOROPTIMIST FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Soroptimist Foundation of Canada

Annual General Meeting 2018

Guest Speaker Biography – Desirée de Jesus



PhD Candidate in Film and Moving Image Studies, Concordia University

MA (with Distinction) in Christianity and the Arts, King's College London

Hons. BA (magna cum laude), Film Studies and Special Honors Curriculum, Hunter College (CUNY)

Desirée de Jesus is a Film and Moving Image Studies PhD candidate in the Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema at Concordia University. Her doctoral research focuses on representations of displaced girls and marginalized women in popular culture. It examines how the treatment of narrative spaces in contemporary films about precarious girlhood provides new and more inclusive ways of understanding how girls develop and experience their identities.

Desirée is an experienced and dedicated researcher, enthusiastic about cultivating knowledge, demonstrating the continued value of film and moving images for society, and serving the needs of diverse audiences. She has curated games and interactive artworks about women and organized events exploring diversity in games and the intersections between feminism and humour. Her dedication to extending film education beyond the traditional classroom is also

evident in her involvement with the adolescent unit of a mental health facility, where she designed and facilitated discussions around popular films. Prior to this, Desirée worked full-time as a mentor for at-risk, inner city youth and enjoyed seeing girls become empowered through this work.

In 2017, Desirée became the only Fine Arts doctoral student selected to join Concordia University's Public Scholars program. During her tenure, Desirée taught an undergraduate film course about girlhood that drew on her doctoral research. She also began producing a series of video essays that helps film lovers think critically about female-driven films and the ways these films speak to broader cultural issues affecting girls and women. While this volunteer video work aims to expand our perceptions of a film canon, it continues Desirée's desire to impact the way people see the world and themselves, thus bridging her academic work and previous service with vulnerable communities.

Desirée is a Soroptimist Foundation of Canada award winner.

Desirée's writing has been published in *Another Gaze*, *The Montreal Gazette*, *Synoptique: An Online Journal of Film and Moving Image Studies*, *The Journal of Popular Culture*, *The Journal of Religion and Film*, and others.