

## Scattered picks up steam

**Paula Lindo**

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The winners of the award for Best T&T Film in Development at the 2017 T&T Film Festival (tfff), writers Karen Martinez and Georgia Popplewell and producer Lesley-Ann Macfarlane, say the prize is a sign of progress. It showed that bpTT and tfff are acknowledging that the process of making a film can be a long and arduous one.

The project, a feature-length narrative script called

Scattered, has already won several prizes, including the Best Caribbean Film Mart Project award at tfff 2016, and has been shortlisted for the Sundance International Screenwriters' Lab and CineMart Rotterdam.

Martinez described the script as a road trip movie with “a strong comic sensibility and visually poetic feel, set in Trinidad and the UK”. It tells the story of Anna, a 33-year-old mixed-race woman whose father is Trinidadian and is raised in the UK by her British mother. When her parental grandmother dies, Alexa, who has hitherto ignored her Caribbean heritage, is asked to scatter her ashes in Matelot.

While in Trinidad, she and her cousin Jade, who is the freewheeling opposite to Alexa's strait-laced self, go on a physical, emotional and psychological journey to scatter the ashes.

“A lot of things happen along the way that threaten to derail the whole process and in the meantime Alexa is being pushed to the limit and comes to terms with lots of aspects of her character and rediscovers parts of herself that she had buried for years while she tried to be an upright citizen. It's quite humorous and also poignant, especially at the end when we discover what is revealed about the grandmother and about the people in Matelot and so on,” Martinez said.

As with Martinez's previous film, the documentary Dreams In Transit, Scattered explores concepts of identity, connectedness to the Caribbean diaspora, history and heritage. Martinez said the road trip concept came about after the Dreams in



Winners of the award for Best T&T Film in Development at the 2017 T&T Film Festival from left, Georgia Popplewell, Lesley-Ann Macfarlane and Karen Martinez.

Transit shoot turned into a road trip, and this became the perfect project for her and Popplewell, old friends, to collaborate on. This is the first feature film for all three women in their respective roles.

Martinez said, “The whole purpose of this award (is that) they want to know it’s not just at a script stage, you’ve moved on the production so that you’re almost ready for shooting given financial constraints.”

Macfarlane agreed and said, “They want to see what talents you’ve attached to the project in terms of any actors, any key crew or cast. We were also awarded a FilmTT grant a few months ago to go towards marketing and development, so that is also a development from this year as well.”

The team said that, while the \$10,000 award from bpTT is also welcome, the prize will bring credibility to the project, thereby enabling it to attract investors both in T&T and the UK.

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