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21st Annual New Directors Showcase Issue



The Class of 2023

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EDITORIAL

Publisher & Editorial Director

Roberta Griefer

203.227.1699 ext. 701 rgriefer@shootonline.com

Editor

Robert Goldrich

203.227.1699 ext. 702 rgoldrich@shootonline.com

ADVERTISING

Digital & Print Rates & Information

marketing@shootonline.com

203.227.1699 ext. 701

www.shootonline.com/go/advertise

Advertising Production

Gerald Giannone

ads@shootonline.com

203.227.1699 ext. 700

OFFICES

Main Office

2046 Treasure Coast Plaza, Suite A-117

Vero Beach, FL 32960 USA

203.227.1699 Fax: 203.571.3355

West

203.227.1699 ext. 702

Print Production

Jim Theodorou

jtheodorou@shootonline.com

Circulation

203.227.1699 ext. 4 circulation@shootonline.com

SHOOT Publicity Wire

203.227.1699 ext. 700 publicitywire@shootonline.com

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By Robert Goldrich

spot.com.mentary



Showcase Directors Mentoring Showcase Directors

Turning 21 signals a maturation of sorts--and it applies to SHOOT's New Directors Showcase on varied fronts, including in one key respect.

This year marks the 21st Showcase and how far we've come is reflected in the mini-profiles of two current Showcase directors who are not yet affiliated with a production company: Cameron Carr and Sophie Tabet.

When acknowledging their mentors, Carr thanked director Andre Muir while Tabet cited Nina Meredith. Both Meredith and Muir are Showcase alums from 2018 and '19, respectively.

Tabet said of Meredith, "She has taught me so much--both technically and also theoretically. I always bounce my ideas off her, and she provides me not only with professional knowledge but with

unwavering support--which as a woman in film, is crucial. She is the first person to encourage me to push my limits, and she has an impeccable eye. Getting to assist her on massive commercials has been a real learning experience."

Meredith, who as a Showcase director was not affiliated with a production company, is now at RadicalMedia.

"She provides me not only with professional knowledge but with unwavering support" --Sophie Tabet on Nina Meredith

Meanwhile Carr said that mentor Muir was the one who originally informed him of SHOOT's New Directors Showcase. Furthermore, Muir sparked Carr's self-confidence. Carr observed, "It is within this confidence that you never stop growing, learning and remaining ready to adapt to for filmmaking fluency."

Back when he was selected for the 2019 Showcase, Muir was unaffiliated with a production house. Now he's at

SMUGGLER, having this year seen his "Truffles" music video for Mick Jenkins earn inclusion at the SXSW Festival.

Muir said that connecting with SMUGGLER has been a key to his career. And he earlier credited SHOOT's New Directors Showcase with bringing that about. "The Showcase changed my life," said Muir, sharing that prior to getting that ex-

posure he had a hard time even securing local market representation in Chicago. But when Muir's short film *4 Corners* made the Showcase cut and was seen at the DGA Theatre in NYC and online, he gained interest from A-level production houses, including SMUGGLER. "It's not like my work had changed" from prior to the Showcase to after the Showcase, observed Muir. But the exposure the Showcase provided was the difference maker.

POV

By Robert Goldrich



CAPE Crusader

CAPE (Coalition of Asian Pacifics in Entertainment), a non-profit organization creating opportunities and driving success for Asian and Pacific Islanders in Hollywood for over 30 years, has announced the return of the CAPE Animation Directors Accelerator with Kevin Noel, SVP, creative for Sony Pictures Animation, taking the helm as the program chair.

In collaboration with Sony Pictures Entertainment, the initiative identifies and equips the next generation of Asian and Pacific Islander animation professionals with the skills needed to become directors in feature film and episodic animation.

The Accelerator was co-founded by Justinian Huang (VP, creative, Sony Pictures Animation) and Michelle Wong (producer, *K-Pop: Demon Hunters*). Selected rising animation filmmakers in

the program will hone both their artistic and leadership skills through a series of panels, workshops, and masterclasses from high-level executives, producers, and creatives in the animation industry, as well as receive one-on-one executive mentorship.

"With the global animation market size projected to surpass \$600 billion by 2030, it's astounding that we can count on roughly two hands the number of Asian American feature film animation directors (and zero Pacific Islanders)," said CAPE executive director Michelle K. Sugihara.

"CAPE is excited to team up with Sony Pictures Entertainment once again to supercharge these creatives' rise into the feature film director's chair."

Ideal candidates for the Accelerator will have five-plus years in the animation field and ambitions of being the creative lead for animation film or episodic proj-

ects. Prioritized levels of experience include head of story, episodic director, art director, CG director, technical director, VFX supervisor, editor, and production designer.

As part of the CAPE Animation Directors Accelerator, CAPE will also be holding a panel at Lightbox Expo in Pasadena on Saturday October 28 centering on comic book adaptation featuring Randall Park (director, *Shortcomings*), Karen Gaviola (director, *The Boys*) and Steve Maeda (co-showrunner, Netflix's *One Piece*).

The CAPE Animation Directors Accelerator is part of other industry-renowned CAPE initiatives such as the CAPE New Writers Fellowship, CAPE Leaders Fellowship, Julia S. Gouw Short Film Challenge, and CAPE Emerging Executive Committee, as well as the soon-to-be-launched CAPE Database, a public-facing database for Asian and Pacific Islander talent, executives, reps, and more.

Directorial and Writer POVs On Storytelling

Alexander Payne sheds light on *The Holdovers*; Julian Breece reflects on *Rustin*

By Robert Goldrich

From top left, clockwise: Dominic Sessa (l-r), Paul Giamatti and Da'Vine Joy Randolph in a scene from *The Holdovers*; director Alexander Payne on the set of *The Holdovers*; Dominic Sessa (l) and Da'Vine Joy Randolph in *The Holdovers*; director Alexander Payne (l) and actor Paul Giamatti on the set of *The Holdovers*; Colman Domingo as Bayard Rustin in a scene from *Rustin*; Jeffrey Mckenzie Jordan (l) and Colman Domingo in a scene from *Rustin*; *Rustin* screenwriter Julian Breece.



On *The Holdovers* (Focus Features), director Alexander Payne fell in love with making period films. From the experience, Payne—an avid history reader who majored in the subject in college—said he realized that a period movie is “the next best thing to time travel.”

At the same time, though, Payne noted that *The Holdovers* is not your typical “period film”—and may not even be one in the strictest sense of the term. Instead Payne explained that with *The Holdovers* he sought to make “a contemporary film in 1970.” It was as if he and his collaborators were living in 1970 and teaming to create a movie back then. It wasn’t imperative to find iconic locations that screamed 1970 to the audience. Rather, living in that year could be reflected in banal and unremarkable backdrops at times—part of everyday life during that era. Payne recalled that production designer Ryan Warren Smith, for example, embraced that approach—the focus, as it’s been in all of Payne’s movies, being on the human story.

At the center of that humanity in *The Holdovers* is an unlikely trio brought together through circumstance. We are taken back to ‘70 over winter break at a New England boarding school. Paul Giamatti stars as Paul Hunham, an adjunct professor of ancient history who’s stuck with the task of being held over at Barton Academy, having to supervise those kids who can’t go home for Christmas. A bit of a curmudgeon, Hunham is generally disliked by his students. But during their holiday confinement, he bonds with a held-over lad, Angus Tully (portrayed by Dominic Sessa in his feature debut). With them during the holidays is the school’s head cook, Mary Lamb (Da’Vine Joy Randolph) whose only child Curtis, a recent Barton grad, was killed in the Vietnam War. Hunham, Tully and Lamb somehow form and find a semblance of family—something they either tragically had lost or never truly had before.

The Holdovers marks a professional reunion between Payne and Giamatti who famously came together on *Sideways*

which in 2005 earned five Oscar nominations, including for Best Picture and Director. The film won one Oscar—Best Adapted Screenplay for Payne. “The process of collaboration between Paul and me [on *The Holdovers*] felt like an extremely natural extension of the same harmony we experienced some 20 years ago making *Sideways*. It just felt right,” said Payne. “I’m sorry it took so damn long to get together again. Since *Sideways*, I was always dreaming of working with him again. My flaw is that I’m slow with screenplays for my next film. I didn’t have many turns at bat between [*Sideways* and *The Holdovers*].” Payne affirmed, though, that he would love to work with Giamatti again—and soon, if possible.

While collaborations have been few and far between for Payne and Giamatti, they have been constant for the director and editor Kevin Tent, ACE. This dates back to Payne’s feature directorial debut, *Citizen Ruth*, a 1996 release. Payne recalled seeking an editor for *Citizen Ruth*,

Alexander Payne Reunites With Actor Paul Giamatti

a search which led him to editor Carole Kravetz for advice and perhaps a referral. Payne remembered telling Kravetz she was too busy and too expensive for him at that point—so whom might she recommend instead. She came up with two names, one of which was Kent. “He [Kent] dropped off a VHS demo at my apartment in Koreatown [in Los Angeles]. He said hello at the door. I liked it and I liked him.” That case of like has been everlasting as Kent has cut all of Payne’s feature films, from *Citizen Ruth* right through to *The Holdovers*.

For Kent, that collaborative relationship has yielded a Best Editing Oscar nomination for *The Descendants* in 2012 and five American Cinema Editors’ Eddie Award nominations—for *Election* in 2000, *About Schmidt* in 2003, *Sideways* in 2005, *The Descendants* in 2012 and *Nebraska* in 2014. Tent won the Eddie for *The Descendants*.

Payne said his connection with Tent has been invaluable. Citing the lifetime working bond between Martin Scorsese and his editor, Thelma Schoonmaker, as a prime example, Payne observed, “When you find that collaboration, you essentially have a co-writer. You co-edit the film, sharing a concern for the performances and the rhythm.” Payne noted that he and Tent are generally always in on the edit together.

In that vein, Payne added that another key member of the post ensemble—working in concert with him and Tent since *Election* (Payne’s second feature)—is music editor Richard Ford. Payne described Ford’s contributions as substantive and



Paul Giamatti in a scene from *The Holdovers*

essential. “Editing feature films involves adding temp music from the earliest days of cutting a film. Richard has grown indispensable in terms of feeding us music, helping us lay it down, all the way to the mix stage.” Ford provides a storytelling precision, able to share on what frame of film a music note will hit. Payne added that Ford is even of considerable help to him in working with composers.

While Tent and Ford are among his long-time collaborators, Payne for the first time worked with cinematographer Eigil Bryld on *The Holdovers*. Years ago, Payne was taking on a film shot partially in Denmark and Sweden and he thought it might be beneficial to have a Scandinavian DP, breaking away momentarily from his longstanding cinematographer Phedon Papamichael. Payne quipped that while Papamichael gets to work with other directors, “gets to sleep around, I don’t.” Among the alternate DPs Payne

explored was Bryld but their teaming didn’t come to pass that time. Instead Payne worked with another Swedish cinematographer. But the director was favorably impressed by Bryld and remembered him. Years later when *The Holdovers* emerged—with Papamichael already committed to lensing *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* film for director James Mangold—Payne reached out to Bryld.

Payne described working with Bryld as “a lovely, effortless collaboration.” Payne added that when hiring a new department head, you get his, her or their colleagues ranging from gaffer to focus puller—and *The Holdovers* benefited from the contributions of Bryld’s team. (For more on Bryld, see this issue’s Cinematographers & Cameras feature story.)

Another first-time collaborator for Payne on *The Holdovers* was writer David Hemingson. While Payne usually writes

the features he directs, he gravitated towards Hemingson this time around. The backstory began to unfold over a decade ago when Payne saw a relatively obscure French film, *Merlusse* (1935), by the acclaimed filmmaker Marcel Pagnol. The film—which left a lasting impression on Payne—told the story of boarding school students marooned with a reviled teacher over the holiday break. Payne thought that premise was fertile ground for a new story.

Fortuitously, a script for a TV series pilot came to Payne four or five years ago. Written by Hemingson, the show was set in an all-boys prep school—and Payne enjoyed what he read. Payne reached out to Hemingson. Payne recalled telling him, “I read your pilot, I don’t want to make it. But would you consider writing something for me set in that world?” From that came a script for *The Holdovers*, which marks Hemingson’s feature film debut after a career largely in television on such series as *Whiskey Cavalier* and *Kitchen Confidential*, which was based on Anthony Bourdain’s memoir and starred Bradley Cooper. An episode for the latter earned Hemingson a Writers Guild of America (WGA) Award nomination.

Helping immeasurably in bringing that script to life was the casting of the boarding school students. In addition to the impressive debut of Sessa as Tully, the four other students held over at Barton were Jason Smith (played by Michael Provost), a rich jock; Teddy Kountze (Brady Hefner), a bully; Ye-Joon Park (Jim Kaplan) whose family is in Korea;

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Da'Vine Joy Randolph (l) and Alexander Payne on set of *The Holdovers*



Dominic Sessa (l) and Paul Giamatti in *The Holdovers*

Backstory On Writing Rustin

Continued from page 5

and Alex Ollerman (Ian Dolley) whose parents are on a religious pilgrimage for the Church of Latter-Day Saints. Eventually all the holdovers are rescued from holiday break purgatory at Barton—except for Tully. The entire ensemble of actors—especially these young adults—speak to Payne’s casting acumen in that finding the right teenagers to deliver believability and authenticity is a delicate proposition.

Payne is a seven-time Oscar nominee, winning two for Best Adapted Screenplay—for *Sideways* in 2005 and *The De-*

Medal of Freedom winner Bayard Rustin, organizer of the 1968 March on Washington where Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his historic “I Have A Dream” speech.

“Back then [in 2013] there were very few Black writers in the system for feature films,” recalled Breece who got a meeting with Black and laid out his case for why he would be the right person to help tell Rustin’s story. As a high school student—long before he even thought of a career as a writer—Breece discovered Rustin and deeply researched him. Motivating



A scene from *Rustin*

scendants in 2012. His directing nominations span *Sideways*, *The Descendants* and *Nebraska* (in 2014). He earned a Best Picture nod for *The Descendants* and another for writing on the strength of *Election* in 2000.

Additionally Payne has garnered a pair of DGA Award nominations—for *Sideways* and *The Descendants*. The latter also earned a nomination for the coveted Humanitas Prize.

Julian Breece

Bringing us an essential piece of history became a higher calling for screenwriter Julian Breece—particularly at a time when history itself, including that of Black America, is being sanitized, denied or intentionally diminished.

Back in 2013 as a writer trying to find a foothold in the entertainment industry, Breece got his big break when he connected with Dustin Lance Black, the Oscar-winning screenwriter of *Milk*, who was looking for a writer to tell the story of civil rights activist and Presidential

Breece was the need and desire to find Black and gay people who achieved success. “There were not a lot of role models in the media who were Black and gay,” related Breece, noting that HIV rates were soaring at the time and homophobic violence was extremely high. “That’s when I found out about Bayard.” That education included learning about Rustin’s friendship with and influence on Dr. King, having a hand in introducing him to nonviolence as an agent of change in society.

In his meeting with Black, Breece noted his connection to Rustin and how much he meant to him personally as a Black gay man. After the meeting, Breece wrote Black a long letter, making sure he realized “how passionate I was about telling this story. The fact that someone was even doing it [a film about Rustin] filled me up with hope.”

After starts and stops, with the film shifting from HBO to Netflix, the project finally emerged with George C.

Continued on page 7

GPN Turns 20

Being mature and accomplished at the age of 20 is a neat trick which has been deftly turned by GPN, the Global Production Network that’s a handpicked collection of well-known and well respected production service companies, tabletop and virtual studios internationally. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year—solidifying its place in the world of international production services—GPN serves as a liaison, cultural translator and network for production companies, agencies and brands that wish to film abroad.



Harry Tracosas

GPN was founded in 2003 by Harry Tracosas who’s been in the film business since the late 1970s. Having traveled and filmed internationally for many years, Tracosas saw the need to connect production companies globally in order to provide a “safety net” for international producers because at that time no services entity of this scope and nature existed. While traveling Tracosas met industry folks who were reliable, honest, committed to excellence and were just “good, decent people.” He knew that to have a global network for production companies with these values could only be of benefit to all involved.

What began as an idea soon became a business and has grown steadily over the past 20 years. As its essence, GPN is value based rather than profit driven. Julia Weichinger, the new owner, has been instrumental for more than a decade in expanding GPN’s client base in Europe. Both Tracosas and Weichinger are committed to having companies within the network who understand GPN’s core values and priorities.



Julia Weichinger

GPN has become a family where each member is independent and self-reliant, however, each member company also has a responsibility to the “whole” as GPN, at its core, is a community.

Each GPN company honors the philosophies, principles of accountability, integrity, mutual respect, transparency and above all, trust. Without these expectations, the network would not work. This is what has made GPN’s longevity possible and why it will continue to be a foundational support for producers and creatively driven companies worldwide.

FilmLA Publishes Table of Content

FilmLA, partner film office for the City and County of Los Angeles and other local jurisdictions, has published a new, first of its kind report analyzing U.S.-produced, first-run, English-language scripted projects distributed in years 2021 and 2022.

The purpose of this report—representing an evolution in FilmLA’s tracking methodology—is to analyze production locations used in the creation of today’s universe of U.S. scripted content. FilmLA intends to publish updates to this report on an annual basis. In previous years, FilmLA issued separate reports on the film and television sectors. This new Scripted Content Study combines an analysis of: (1) television series (streaming, cable and broadcast); (2) original, made-for-cable movies; (3) first-run feature films in theatrical release; and (4) original feature films made for streaming services. Around 1,000 projects meeting these criteria are distributed each calendar year.

According to this report, Greater L.A. was the number one filming location for U.S. scripted content, in terms of the number of hosted productions. That said, growth in the region’s total production capture appeared flat (less than one percent) between 2021 and ‘22, compared to a four percent rise in total industry output and growth in competing jurisdictions.



Paul Audley

“The change our industry has undergone over the past few years is profound,” noted Paul Audley, president of FilmLA. “Here, in a moment where many predict a reduction in industry output, this study establishes a baseline for us to understand the challenges ahead.”

Julian Breece Delves Into Civil Rights Activist Bayard Rustin

Continued from page 6

Wolfe directing and Colman Domingo in the title role. *Rustin* (Netflix) debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival in September and is slated for theatrical release on November 3, and its premiere on Netflix come November 17. Screenplay

producer on Lee Daniel's Sammy Davis Jr. limited series at Hulu, and he's served as a writer and producer on such series as Prime Video's *Harlem* and Hulu's *The First*.

And while it's been a long wait to bring *Rustin* to fruition, the timing in some re-

[Rustin], his full complexity outside of being a brilliant figure with swagger and bravado." Rustin and Naegle became life partners in the 1970s and were together until Rustin's death in 1987. Decades before gay marriage was an option, Rustin adopted Naegle to give legal protection

able to see, including the promise of the March on Washington. Getting to know Rustin, affirmed Breece, has "helped me to be more brave about speaking out for myself, what I want to write, the kind of career I want to have and who I want to be as a person."



Colman Domingo in a scene from *Rustin*

credit goes to Breece and Black. Wolfe and Black refined Breece's script.

Produced by President Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground, *Rustin* will receive the Icon & Creator Tribute for Social Justice at the 33rd annual Gotham Awards ceremony on November 27. The Icon & Creator Tribute was created for this year's Gotham Awards in order to recognize cultural icons and the filmmakers responsible for bringing that icon's story to life.

Jeffrey Sharp, executive director of The Gotham Film & Media Institute, stated, "This beautifully crafted and moving film shines a light on the visionary contributions of a proud gay Black man on the heels of the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington."

When Breece was originally brought in to be considered for the writing gig, it was the 50th anniversary of the historic March. While it was a slow moving process to get the project fully off the ground and realized, much has happened in the past 10 years. For one, Breece's involvement in the film opened up doors for him. He co-wrote the acclaimed Netflix series *When They See Us* and recently penned the screenplay for Fox Searchlight's forthcoming Alvin Ailey biopic, which will be directed by Oscar winner (*Moonlight*) Barry Jenkins. Breece is also a consulting

spect is ideal, according to Breece. It's now the 60th anniversary and comes at a time when Black history is under siege, to the point in some cases where even slavery is being sugarcoated. The story of Bayard Rustin thus becomes even more relevant today as we see the power of people from different walks of life coming together to advance reform and positive change in society. *Rustin* puts a long overdue spotlight on an extraordinary, progressive and unrelenting man of indomitable spirit who dared to imagine a different world, inspiring, strategizing and organizing a movement in a march toward freedom.

In fashioning the screenplay, Breece prioritized accuracy. He sought out and connected with those who knew Rustin and worked alongside him. In that process, Breece found the remnants of a stigma about Rustin's sexuality as colleagues instinctively felt they still had to protect him, dating back to when, observed Breece, it was "dangerous for him to be who he was."

Thus it took multiple meetings with people from Rustin's past in order for them to open up and share more freely about who he was.

Breece recollected that interviewing Walter Naegle "really broke things wide open for my understanding of the man



Glynn Turman (l) and Colman Domingo in *Rustin*

to their relationship. Breece said Naegle opened up to him about who Rustin was "in the safety of their home which was his sanctuary." Naegle's generosity in sharing about Rustin helped to inform Breece's writing.

Another possible factor in pushing back the timetable for the *Rustin* feature was casting the title role as leading Black actors, said Breece, weren't all that interested early on in playing a gay character. However when Domingo entered the picture, it was just "perfect," assessed Breece. I saw Bayard in him. His star had just stared to rise. He was perfect, everything that Bayard stood for. To have a Black gay actor play Bayard was really beautiful and important for the story."

As for his biggest takeaway or lessons learned from his experience on *Rustin*, Breece shared that in discovering who Rustin was, he found a man who was "kind but also formidable. He stood in his truth, demanded dignity, lived a life of protest against injustice." Breece noted that when "working in Hollywood, you bend yourself a lot in order to fit in." Seeing Rustin's courage to dare to be different is inspiring. Breece further observed that being an outcast of sorts, an outsider, sharpened Rustin's sense of what freedom is, what injustice is, making him able to see things that others weren't

What's in store

This look at *The Holdovers* and *Rustin* is a preview of what's to come in *SHOOT's* The Road To Oscar, a 16-part series of feature stories slated to run in the weekly *SHOOT*>e.dition, The *SHOOT* Dailies and on *SHOOTonline.com*, with select installments also in print/PDF issues. The series will appear all the way through to the Academy Awards gala ceremony. Nominations for the 96th Academy Awards will be announced on January 23, 2024. The 96th Oscars will be held on Sunday, March 10, 2024.

In the weeks head, you'll read about key contributors to assorted feature films such as Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon* (Apple TV+), Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer* (Universal Pictures), Greta Gerwig's *Barbie* (Warner Bros. Pictures), Ridley Scott's *Napoleon* (Sony Pictures), Emerald Fennell's *Saltburn* (Amazon Prime Video) and David Fincher's *The Killer* (Netflix), among many others.

In the mix will be a number of artists whose impact has been felt on more than one film, including cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto, ASC, AMC who lensed both *Barbie* and *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Prieto is a three-time Oscar nominee—for *Brokeback Mountain*, *Silence* and *The Irishman*.

Short Takes

FOCUS GROUP TURNS CHAOTIC FOR TENNESSEE LOTTO

Nashville-based ad agency BUNTIN has turned out a spot for the Tennessee Education Lottery Corporation in which Instant Game characters—from prospectors to pirates to metallic mimes—jockey for position in a focus group. Their lively discussion winds up devolving into chaos, sending the moderator crying for help.

The comedy ad spotlights the varied Instant Games available. Directed by Jon Nowak via 8th Street Productions, the commercial is part of the “What’s Your Instant Game?” campaign.



EMERGING FILMMAKER GRANT WINNERS TO BE FETED IN JANUARY

The winners of the 2024 Spirit Awards’ Emerging Filmmaker Grants—three filmmakers who will each receive a \$25,000 unrestricted cash grant—will be announced at the 2024 Film Independent Spirit Awards Nominee Brunch, taking place on Sunday, January 6, in Santa Monica, Calif.

Every year, exceptional emerging filmmakers are acknowledged by the Spirit Awards, with nominees and winners chosen by committee. The three awards are: The Someone to Watch Award, recognizing talented narrative filmmakers of singular vision who have not yet received appropriate recognition; The Producers Award honoring emerging producers who, despite highly limited resources, demonstrate the creativity, tenacity and vision required to produce quality, independent films; and the Truer Than Fiction Award, presented to an emerging director of nonfiction features who has not yet received significant recognition. Past winners include Mollye Asher, Jessica Beshir, Elegance Bratton, Mel Eslyn, Debra Granik, Nikyatu Jusu, Gerry Kim, Shaka King, Bing Liu, Kelly Reichardt, Lizzie Shapiro and Chloé Zhao.

The Spirit Awards and Emerging Filmmaker Awards nominees will be announced on December 5, on Film Independent’s YouTube, Facebook and X channels. Winners will be revealed at the ceremony taking place Sunday, February 25, 2024 in Santa Monica.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE...

Alissa Feldbau has been promoted to executive producer of production company Voyager in New York. From bidding and supervising commercials, branded content, short films, and music videos, to producing campaigns of all sizes, she has been an integral part of Voyager’s growth over the last four years. Feldbau began her career as an agency producer at Arnold in Boston, working on a variety of different campaigns from producing cutting edge social videos for Jack Daniel’s that tipped the scale to a new approach of reaching all kinds of audiences, to large scale television campaigns featuring celebrities and groundbreaking messaging for CenturyLink and Pfizer. After coming on board as head of production at Voyager in 2019, she quickly became engaged across all aspects of production and development, enabling



Alissa Feldbau

the expansion of the company’s roster of directing talent and doubling of the internal production staff, alongside managing the shop’s ever-growing slate of films and commercial projects for clients such as Planned Parenthood, T-Mobile and Amazon....Editor Zoë Mountain has joined creative editorial/VFX company Nomad. Mountain is known for such music videos as Gryffin and Tinashe’s “Scandalous” and The Kid Laroi’s “Love Again.” Mountain has also worked on notable commercial and editorial projects, ranging from a *Glamour Magazine*’s Woman of the Year shoot featuring poet Amanda Gorman, to campaigns for the likes of Calirosa Tequila....

Welcome to the Special *SHOOT* 21st Annual New Directors Showcase profile section. It’s hard to believe this is the 21st year of the Showcase. We love conducting the New Directors Search and producing the Showcase because it gives us the opportunity to introduce and celebrate new talent, complementing our coverage of up-and-coming directors in *SHOOT* Magazine and on *SHOOT*online year ‘round.

Each year we conduct the official NDS Search and receive hundreds of entries consisting of a great variety of short and long-form advertising and entertainment content. Once the field is narrowed down to the final Showcase, each director who has long-form work selected provides an up-to-two-minute excerpt or trailer for the Showcase Reel. Since the shortened versions don’t do justice to the work, we encourage you to seek out the directors to see the full versions via contact info on each director’s profile page on the special *SHOOT* NDS website: <https://nds.shootonline.com>.

The following section in this print issue contains thumbnail sketches of the Showcase directors with their responses to select questions. Additional Q&As with each director appear on the NDS site along with the Showcase Reel. We hope you take a look at each director’s profile page, view the real and spread the word to your colleagues to check out the work.

Our in-person *SHOOT* NDS event is set for Thursday, October 26, at the DGA Theatre in New York City. We very much value getting together, sharing insights and points of view during an afternoon event with panelists and speakers, including an In The Director’s Chair session, followed by debuting the NDS Reel on the big screen that same evening—all at the DGA—and then capped off by an afterparty at The-Artery.

Well beyond those proceedings, the Showcase Reel will remain a major means of exposure for new worthwhile talent, continuing to be scrutinized by the advertising and entertainment communities which are increasingly interconnected. Networking and dialogue persist with the work of Showcase directors serving as a catalyst given the industry’s insatiable need for new talent.

The NDS Reel remains a force for drawing people closer as agencies seek new collaborators, and production companies reach out to directors who can enhance their rosters. The Reel also is a platform for new voices to be heard as diverse storytelling perspectives are more valuable and relevant than ever in helping to better society through fostering more empathy and deeper understanding of others, including those often underrepresented in the media landscape.

Seventeen of the Showcase directors are women and two are nonbinary. The overall lineup totals 35 directors—consisting of 31 individual helmers and two duos. Seventeen of the directors (including a duo) are unaffiliated with a production company.

Showcase directors’ body of work spans commercials, PSAs, branded content, short films, a music video, a docuseries, documentary shorts and a feature film.

This year’s Showcase field sports directors of varied backgrounds. The mix includes editors, production designers, photographers, actors, writers, live theater professionals, film school students and/or grads, and advertising agency artisans.

Helping to enable new voices to be heard is most gratifying for us at *SHOOT*. We wish all the NDS filmmakers a long and successful career, and we are excited to play some small part in bringing them to your attention. We hope you enjoy the NDS Profiles and Reel as we come together literally and figuratively this year and for many years to come.

—**Roberta Grier**

Publisher & Editorial Director
rgrier@shootonline.com



31 Individual Directors, 2 Duos Earn Slots In Showcase

Lineup includes 17 women, two nonbinary filmmakers, 17 directors who are not yet affiliated

A SHOOT Staff Report

SHOOT's 21st annual New Directors Showcase (NDS) offers a total of 35 up-and-coming directors filling 33 slots (31 solo directors, and two duos). The field includes 17 women, and two nonbinary directors.

The NDS Class of 2023 includes directors from varied backgrounds such as editing, production design, photography, acting, writing, live theater and serving in advertising agency capacities.

Ad agency pedigree

On the agency score, director Sergii Shevtsov, who recently signed with production company Institute for U.S. representation and is handled in Canada by Radke, was raised in Ukraine and is now based in North America. Over the course of Shevtsov's agency career, working his way up from copywriter to creative director, he honed his storytelling instincts. His most recent agency roost in Ukraine was Shots. Embarking upon a directing career, he worked with Ukrainian and international brands. Shevtsov earned a Showcase slot for the Izi spot "It's Cool To Be Glued."

Another example of a Showcase director with an agency pedigree is Cameron Carr who's currently unaffiliated with a production company. He continues to work at Wieden+Kennedy NY in commercialmaking and on the account side. Carr gained Showcase inclusion for his short film *Harlem Fragments*.

DNA

This year's Showcase also includes three with notable directorial DNA: Ben

Brady of production house True Gentleman whose dad is comedy director Jordan Brady; Eli Snyder of Believe Media, son of feature filmmaker Zack Snyder; and Merawi Gerima of Serial Pictures.

Gerima spent his childhood on film sets and in edit rooms with his filmmaker parents—his father, legendary Ethiopian filmmaker Haile Gerima, who influenced LA's Rebellions film movement; and mother Shirikiana Aina, an American film director, DP, producer, and writer.

Merawi Gerima has made a name for himself. His feature *Residue* won the John Cassavetes Award at the 2021 Film Independent Spirit Awards. And via Serial Pictures, Gerima recently wrapped his first spot, "Certified Lover Boy," for Drake's NOCTA X Nike line. This work helped Gerima gain Showcase inclusion.

Ben Brady earned his Showcase slot for Cava de Oro's "Connection" commercial. And Eli Snyder was selected for the Showcase on the strength of the short *Aves*.

Unaffiliated

Seventeen of this year's Showcase directors (including a duo) are unaffiliated with a production company.

In addition to the aforementioned Carr, the unaffiliated crop of up-and-coming filmmaking talent consists of: Calvin Cal-



lins, Jr. for "Contagious Swagger," branded entertainment for Air Jordan; Jacqueline Christy for the feature film *Magic Hour*; MG Evangelista for the documentary short *They Call Me Suki*; Stacy Gaspar for the short film *Ritmo*; Jennifer Greco for the short film *Esmeralda*; Daniel

Kreizberg for the short film *Tählequah the Whale: A Dance of Grief*; The Kummerl Twins for BeReal's "The Sunday Scaries" commercial; Jessica Makinson for the "@Here4theKids" PSA; Anthony Marinelli for the short film *Why I Had To Kill You While You Slept*; David Nixon, Jr. for the short film *Lumps*; Alex Ramsey for the documentary short *Limbo*; Danielle Shapira (whose agent is The Directors Network) for Veritas' "Conquer Every Channel" (a video opening for a tech presentation event); Megan Stowe for *Learn With Love*, a documentary short for The Trevor Project; Sophie Tabet for "The Thrill of Indulgence," branded content for Alfa Romeo; and Boson Wang for the documentary short 词典 – *The Dictionary*.

Company ties

Eighteen Showcase directors (16 individuals and a duo) have production company affiliations. Besides Brady, Gerima, Shevtsov and Snyder, Showcase filmmakers affiliated with production houses

are: Mia Barnes of RadicalMedia for Ed Sheeran's "Eyes Closed" music video; Elda Broglio of 1stAveMachine Buenos Aires for the "WomanLifeFreedom" public service spot; McKenzie Chinn of Tessa Films for the short film *A Real One*; Leslie Cunningham of Diagonal Media for "Rise Up for LGBTQ+ Youth," the opening video for the GLSEN Respect Awards; Daisy Ifama of Tinygiant for the YouTube video profile "Mahalia"; Luke Jaden of ONE at Optimus for Ford's "Life Elevated" commercial; Somayeh Jafari of Magnetic Field for "40Y," branded content for Singleton Whisky; Justice Jamal Jones of Valiant Pictures for the short film *Notes on a Siren*; Nathalie Lamb of Emerald Pictures for VITRA's "Heirloom" commercial; Chelsea Odudu of Chromista TV for "Pursuit of Home," a branded content piece for Chanel; C.T. Robert of Partizan for the SoundCloud docuseries short *Scenes: SoCal Soul*; Anthony Jamari Thomas of Scheme Engine for the "Man U Betta..." commercial for Scarr's Pizza and Psyche Organic; and Julien & Justen Turner of Invisible Collective for Nike X Social Status' Recess short film.

The following pages contain thumbnail sketches of the 2023 SHOOT Showcase directors with their responses to select questions. Additional Q&As with each Showcase director will appear on <https://nds.shootonline.com> on 10/27 and in a special NDS SHOOT>e.dition the following week. (More detailed coverage of the New Directors Showcase panel discussion and related developments will appear in the coming weeks on SHOOTonline and the SHOOT>e.dition.)



the
directors
network



Congratulates
Danielle Shapira

SHOOT 2023
New Directors Showcase

Filmmakers Mia Barnes, Ben Brady and Elda Broglio

Continued from page 9



Mia Barnes

RadicalMedia
Ed Sheeran's "Eyes Closed"
(music video)

shots - I could go on. Jim Bouvet, my EP at RadicalMedia has also been instrumental in teaching me the business side of things and building me up as a new director.

8) Who is your favorite director and why?

Some key inspiration comes from: Ari Aster, Hayao Miyazaki, Luca Guadagnino, Melina Matsoukas, Christopher Nolan, Hiro Murai.

7) Have you a mentor and if so, who is that person (or persons) and what has been the lesson learned from that mentoring which resonates with you?

Dave Meyers (director) has been mentoring me since I was 20 years old and finishing up college. I was able to move to LA as an intern for him, and eventually became his full time creative assistant, to now where we occasionally are co directing partners. Dave has taught me the fundamentals of directing, as I came from no film background and had no formal film schooling. How to mold and shape an idea, how to strike culture in a way that will have lasting impact, how to structure your day so you get all your



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Ben Brady

True Gentleman
Cava de Oro's "Connection"
(commercial)

passion for storytelling and ability to create. They had a vision about something and could communicate that.

3) What is your most recent project?

My most recent project is for a tequila brand called Cava de Oro. It was a project I crafted myself. I also directed and DP'd. I shot it on spec and it was picked up by the brand on social media.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Having a team. Collaboration is my favorite part of being a director.

5) What is the worst part of being a director?

Making decisions.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

The first project I professionally directed was for "Quility" a life insurance company. The agency was Union out of North Carolina. We shot in June of 2021.

2) How did you get into directing?

I was introduced by my father and older cousin of mine. I grew up on set; watching and participating in commercials my old man would direct. My older cousin also threw me in a few projects as a kid. I didn't completely understand as a kid what it meant to be a director, but I did feel their



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Congrats to our BEN BRADY and all the talented filmmakers in the SHOOT New Directors Showcase '23



TRUEGENT.TV



Elda Broglio

1stAveMachine Buenos Aires
"WomanLifeFreedom" (PSA)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

The first piece I solo directed was a very small but beautiful breast cancer awareness animated spot that I wrote, directed and illustrated in 2021. This passion project gave me the final push and served as a starting point for my directing career. Later that year, I joined the talented 1stAveMachine Buenos Aires directors' roster, and my first project was a series of commercials for Ericsson combining live action interviews with colorful animations.

2) How did you get into directing?

It was a natural evolution, I suppose. For several years, I made my way in prestigious animation studios; my passion and curiosity drove me to immerse myself in every phase of the process. I delved into storyboarding, illustration, design, editing, photography, and animation. I transitioned from being a designer to an art director, and, even though I wanted to direct, somehow I felt that was the ceiling in the industry for me. It wasn't until Director Mercedes Lopez Flores - after sharing some projects together - asked me why I was not directing, that I realized I had all the tools necessary to do it. She was the one who recommended me, and thanks to Lautaro Brunatti and Toni Dieguez, who saw my potential and gave me the opportunity, I am here today, directing and even co-writing scripts. I am very grateful and happy for this.



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Continued on page 12

THE DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA

congratulates

**all of the directors selected for the
SHOOT 21st Annual New Directors Showcase!**

*You are the future of the industry, and we
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Directors Calvin Callins Jr., Cameron Carr, McKenzie Chinn

Continued from page 10



Calvin Callins Jr.

Unaffiliated

Air Jordan's "Contagious Swagger" (excerpt from branded entertainment film)

2) How did you get into directing?

When I was in high school, I use to have a notebook where I would write a bunch of storylines and loglines for films I would want to star in as an actor. Back then, it was my dream to be an actor. However, one day my dad saw me writing in the notebook and wanted to take a look at it. He then told me that what I was doing was the work of a writer/producer/director. As a high school teenager with no real knowledge of the industry I had shut that down and kept on writing stories with me being only the actor. Not too long after that, I then found myself making highlight and promo videos for our high school sport teams which then led me to join the morning show crew. This was when I started to learn a little about the filmmaking industry but more so on the broadcast side so the work I ended up doing was mostly camera work.

It wasn't until I got to college where I actually practiced and executed being a director and this is the role I see myself continuing in the future. However, I will still achieve my childhood dream to be an actor as well.

3) What is your most recent project?

My most recent project is the project seen in this Showcase, "Contagious Swagger." "Contagious Swagger" is a branded entertainment film I wrote and directed for Air Jordan and it's about a Black man visiting his Asian girlfriend's parents for his first time. This project really allowed me to find my voice as a writer & director and I'm very grateful for the opportunities this film has presented me with.



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Cameron Carr

Unaffiliated

Harlem Fragments (excerpt from short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professionally directed work was this March 2023, writing, directing and producing *Harlem Fragments*. After producing, and first assistant directing five films in the last year while off the clock at my advertising job, I was able to pitch FUJIFILM on a script that I had wrote, developed for the largest production Budget I've ever worked on for a short film, \$100K. Once I secured Fuji as partners, everything else culminated, from the elite group of filmmaking crew I had assembled from producing all of my previous films. Upon my pitch, Fuji expressed that I was the most buttoned up put together pitch they had seen, and already had my animator, composer, post production house, location, and full cast and crew locked for the production that was taking place with or without their backing/funding in 3 weeks. This directorial debut only solidified and affirmed everything I had been working for, as it's my absolute mission to breach into the industry, with representation, and on a directors' roster, with synergy to direct narrative features, television, branded content, stylized high production value documentary, music videos, and everything in between.



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5) What is the worst part of being a director?

Not being able to continue directing on a project. When a project ends — your brain that has been stimulated for so long on the dedication to the craft and accomplishing the vision, you see the magic and legendary tale close its book. There is so much you can continue to constantly build and add to a story that when you close the book on a project, story or campaign — you have to now go venture out and find something that hopefully may be just as magnificent as the one you problem solved, tinkered and Rubik's cubed to get just right for so damn long (or too damn short). That's what you call the director bug.



McKenzie Chinn

Tessa Films

A Real One (trailer for the director's short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first work as director was the poetry video "First You Need A Body," for Growing Concerns Poetry Collective, of which I am also a member, on its album BIG DARK BRIGHT FUTURES. I worked with a small professional crew, including DP Remsy Atassi, editor Lindsay McKenna, and colorist Kalvin Johnson. The video, featuring original music by poetry collective member Jeffrey Michael Austin, explores Black women's experience of personal agency, sensuality, and power, and crafts rich imagery around the poem's allusions to tennis star Serena Williams, as well as "The Little Mermaid" mythology to support those themes.

Filmed in 2020 over two days on the south side of Chicago, the video was completed and released in 2021.

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I grew up in Fort Washington, Maryland, a suburb of Washington DC. I was attracted to books, storytelling, and performance at young age, and decided as a teenager to become an actor. I honed my performance skills working in theatre in DC, Baltimore, and Chicago, then began working in television and film as Chicago's on-camera industry expanded.

After witnessing the emotional subtlety and cinematic magic that the camera offered, alongside my growing confidence in my own creative vision, I began creating my own opportunities to grow in my craft as a storyteller with an expansive vision and a specific point of view. Honoring my foundations in poetry, Black culture, and activism, I forged working relationships with friends and collaborators I'd connected with in Chicago's vibrant DIY artist communities, and found independent and economical ways to create the work I wanted to see in the world.

My work, thus far, has culminated in the short film *A Real One*, which is completing a strong run at film festivals, and is intended to help pave the way toward its feature version, which is currently in late development, and has received strong support from organizations from Sundance to Gotham.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

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Cast & Crew

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Jacqueline Christy, Leslie Cunningham and MG Evangelista

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Jacqueline Christy

Unaffiliated

Magic Hour

(excerpt from feature film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professionally directed work is my feature film *Magic Hour*. It is loosely inspired by the wonderful adventure of going to the NYU Graduate Film Program - a little later in life. It was joyful chaos all the way through and I hope my film encourages people to go out and live their dream - at any age, on their own terms. *Magic Hour* stars Miriam Shor, Sendhil Ramamurthy, Austin Pendleton and many other brilliant actors. In the story, a once-promising filmmaker, Harriet, languishes in the suburbs of New Jersey. Dumped by her philandering husband and reviled by her teenage daughter, Harriet decides to secretly live her dream of going to film school. She leads a double life and loves every minute of her adventures and misadventures. When she gets her first professional directing job, she is horrified to find that the professional film environment is a cutthroat place run by bullies and their terrified minions. She pines for the nourishing, artistic environment of film school. When she gets replaced by her nemesis, and found out by her daughter, Harriet needs to decide if her film, film school, and her long-cherished ambition to be a director is pure folly or if it's a dream worth saving.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

3) What is your most recent project?

My next project, *Operatives Attract*, is an FBI wedding movie. It is very loosely based on true events that took place off the coast of New Jersey many years ago. The FBI staged an elaborate wedding sting operation to lure a criminal mastermind and dozens of his cronies onto a yacht so they could arrest all of them at once. In my fictionalized version, two undercover agents - a vengeful femme fatale and an idealistic rookie - pose as bride and groom. But when they fall in love for real, their actual feelings complicate the operation - veering from love to hate and back again with neither agent knowing if the other is playing them or if love between agents can ever be the real thing.



Leslie Cunningham

Diagonal Media

GLSEN's "Rise Up for LGBTQ+ Youth" (GLSEN Respect Awards' show opening video)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

In 2021 I was a freelance podcast producer for a show about underwear. I had a video producer background so I pitched a few video concepts to the show's host who was fully on board and a great collaborator. She championed my work with the parent production company and I was given the opportunity to write, direct and shoot digital videos for their whole suite of podcasts. It was creative and fulfilling work with a lot of fun and interesting people. I was so happy to be behind the camera (and getting paid for it) after having been out of consistent work during the pandemic. It felt like it went from 0 to 100.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

2) How did you get into directing?

I went to school for broadcast journalism and very quickly realized that wasn't my path. Luckily the journalism program at Syracuse is incredibly hands-on and I had thoughtful mentors along the way. My senior year I co-created a documentary series called "Syracuse Stories" with my friend, and a current producing partner, Hernz Laguerre Jr. That experience is probably what started me down the path that eventually led to directing.

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre--comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

I'm currently focused on commercials and short documentaries. My work leans toward drama and social-impact but I hope to work on some dystopian or sci-fi stories one day, I think that would be a fun challenge. My long term goal is to work in long and short form narrative content alongside the work I'm currently doing.



MG Evangelista

Unaffiliated

They Call Me Suki (excerpt from documentary short)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professional work was *They Call Me Suki*, featured in "AAPI Heritage Heroes," available on Hulu. The Asian American Foundation (TAAF) wanted to highlight and create a Special that spotlights six everyday AAPI heroes from across the country nominated for their stories of service and courage. I was immediately drawn to Suki Terada Ports due to her extensive activism, from civil rights to HIV/AIDS education and prevention in the Asian-American community in New York. She is tenacious and charming — in a way that makes one sit up and want to listen, so my doc short film became about capturing that spirit.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

2) How did you get into directing?

My mom and aunts loved to talk about their homeland, and the good and even tough times here in the States. Their anecdotes were bittersweet but always had a touch of humor. Ever since, I've been striving to be as captivating a storyteller as they were, but using film as my medium instead of the chatter around a nightly table laden with Filipino food. When I got my first camcorder in seventh grade and started making little movies for school projects, it was the beginning for me.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

The best part of being a director is directing. Production and the thrill of collaborating with other fine artists and craftspeople and making something out of an idea. The film and filmmaking takes on its own life and becomes this organic thing we must respond to in real-time. When I'm on set, I feel like I'm chasing a sense of flow that can happen when everything is aligned, and it makes the homework and all the prep in preproduction worthwhile.

Filmmakers Stacy Gaspard and Merawi Gerima



Stacy Gaspard

Unaffiliated

Ritmo (trailer for the director's short film)

and be able to see ourselves in, with a dash of magic for good measure.

I see myself creating content for film and television, commercials, music video and even Broadway. I want to keep exploring the mediums I can use to tell the stories, and become a household name among the other trailblazers of Hollywood today.

[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

Not too long ago, I was an actress who occasionally booked commercials as I worked as a staff member at AFI, giving tours to prospective students at a school that felt like a pipe dream to attend. Cut to three years later, I've graduated from AFI as a Directing Fellow. This experience has shown me how it's okay to dream big, and sometimes you might have to build the road ahead to make your dreams a reality.

In my work, I explore themes for the dreamers, creating worlds that we can escape into



Merawi Gerima

Serial Pictures

NOCTA X Nike's "Certified Lover Boy" (commercial)

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I'm from Washington, DC. I waited tables through undergrad. After graduating with a degree in graphic design, I pivoted to I.T. I worked as a network engineer in a hospital for a couple years before going to film school in Los Angeles.

[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

2) How did you get into directing?

My parents are pioneers in Black independent film. They emerged out of what is now being called the LA Rebellion film movement which was essentially a critical mass of Black and Brown filmmakers who banded together to survive the racism of the film industry. Under such conditions, they excelled at generating high production value with microscopic budgets, since that was the only way to tell their stories and that is still true today unfortunately. I got into directing in order to continue the family craft and to hopefully help bring resources to their current projects.



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Directors Jennifer Greco, Daisy Ifama and Luke Jaden

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Jennifer Greco

Unaffiliated

Esmeralda (trailer for the director's short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

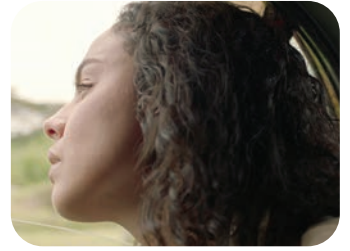
My first professionally directed work was my short film *Esmeralda*. We shot it internationally in 2022 and had the opportunity to work with well-known Colombian actors. Even though this was my first film, this was a story that deserved to be made as big and powerful as possible so we went for it. The film has been selected as a semi-finalist at Flicker's & Miami Short Film Festival. It also won Best North American Short Film at the Female Eye Film Festival and was recently official selection to Evolution Mallorca Int Film Festival, and Catalina Film Festival, among others.

2) How did you get into directing?

From a young age, my leadership skills were well developed so I used to come up with creative games, put together teams, and lead them. I grew up in Colombia, and my dream was to study film, but none of the colleges in my city had the program, and my parents didn't have the resources to pay for it. I studied hard and won multiple scholarships that brought me to the U.S. This gave me the opportunity to get into NYU and the industry. I always wanted to direct, so I started practicing with my school projects. There are so many stories that I carry with me, and I look forward to sharing them with the world.

3) What is your most recent project?

I am currently working on developing a documentary about a skateboarder from Inglewood who uses his skateboard as a way to escape from the violence, drugs and chaos he grew up in all the way to becoming a pro. This story seeks to highlight the underrepresented communities, and encourage them to fight for their dreams.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)



Daisy Ifama

Tinygiant

YouTube's *Mahalia* (excerpt from video profile)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professional directing gig was for Google, called *WomenWill* in 2020. It was an idea I pitched and directed on how women in music across Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya were using tech to advance their careers. It was a huge responsibility to travel and shoot these six stories and to represent each of their worlds at such an exciting time for music culture coming from the continent. We actually arrived in South Africa with no talent secured and ran into singer Sho Madozi in the airport and managed to convince her on the spot to be in the film (!!) We shot with her a few days later and had the most wonderful conversation and time with her in the studio. We then launched the film at a free digital skills event for women in all three regions later that year.

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I grew up in the UK, moving between London and the Midlands. My mum raised me by herself and surrounded me with people from all walks of life. She taught me to embrace difference at a young age. Growing up with a community oriented perspective has influenced my work and my commitment to bringing my wide-ranging personal experiences into projects which educate whilst still being entertaining. I've worked in lots of different roles across the filmmaking industry, from producing, shooting, editing and directing with companies including the BBC, YouTube, Netflix UK, Vogue, and often with Google. Some of the work I'm most proud of, comes from being a founding member of the British media platform and magazine gal-dem, which sadly closed its doors earlier this year. I launched and ran the video section to our global audience of millions with the goal to address inequality and misrepresentation in the industry and platform the work of people of color from marginalized genders.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)



Luke Jaden

ONE at Optimus

Ford's "Life Elevated" (commercial)

2) How did you get into directing?

I went to DePaul in Chicago (majoring in English with a focus in creative writing), but I dropped out when I got offered my first feature film during my junior year. I was writing and directing short films in high school, so I always knew I wanted to be a filmmaker. That decision was cemented after my uncle introduced me to the Criterion Collection when I was twelve. After watching films by Terrence Malick, David Lynch, David Cronenberg and Nicolas Roeg, I immediately knew I wanted to tell stories in a cinematic medium.

3) What is your most recent project?

I just did a commercial for a fashion brand called ZARA that we shot on 16mm & 35mm film.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Telling stories. I love that you get to go into these worlds and explore them on a deep level.

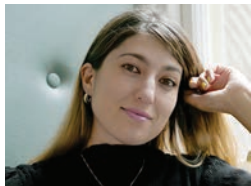


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6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

Commercials and branded content, television, movies.

Helmers Somayeh Jafari and Justice Jamal Jones



Somayeh Jafari

Magnetic Field

Singleton Whisky's "40Y" (branded content)

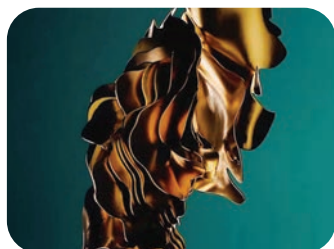
My first commissioned work as a director was for a Braun TVC in 2021.

I began my journey by studying for a bachelor's degree in media arts, in which I explored scriptwriting, directing, editing and contemporary art. I then studied documentary filmmaking for my masters, and after graduating, I moved to London and began my career as an assistant video editor in 2011. In the years that ensued, whilst freelancing and working in-house at advertising agencies and production companies as an editor, I wrote, produced, directed, and edited a variety of my own self-invested projects. This began to pay dividends and eventually aided in my transition from working primarily as an editor to getting commissioned and ultimately becoming represented as a director.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

2) How did you get into directing?

I began my journey by studying for a bachelor's degree in media arts, in which I explored scriptwriting, directing, editing and contemporary art. I then studied documentary filmmaking for my masters, and after graduating, I moved to London and began my career as an assistant video editor in 2011. In the years that ensued, whilst freelancing and working in-house at



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Justice Jamal Jones

Valiant Pictures

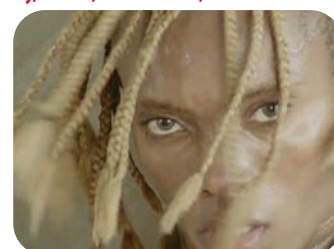
Notes on a Siren (trailer for the director's short film)

I fell into directing after a failed attempt at acting school. I still love acting, but at the time I become bored and unsatisfied with playing underdeveloped Black Queer side characters. This led me to create my work where I didn't have to contain my imagination and fit into a predetermined box. The shift was natural and freeing.

I enjoy commercials, TV and film in different ways. As a career path, I would like to oscillate between the three. In regards to genre, within film I found that I am drawn to historical fiction with a magical and theatrical flare. Black Queer stories have been obscured in the timeline, overdubbed with false narratives. Through historical fiction, one can make time plastic, reshooting, and replacing scenes in history.

2) How did you get into directing?

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?



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Congratulations

LUKE JADEN

**2023 SHOOT
New Directors
Showcase**

optimus.com/one/

Kreizberg, Kummerl Twins

Continued from page 17



Daniel Kreizberg

Unaffiliated

Tahlequah the Whale: A Dance of Grief (excerpt from short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

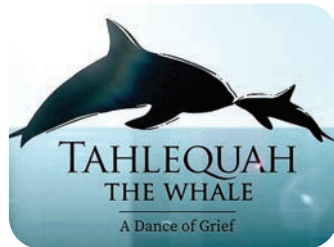
The animated short film *Tahlequah the Whale: A Dance of Grief* is my directorial debut, for which I led an international co-production featuring an Emmy and Grammy award-winning team. It premiered in May 2023 at the Oscar-qualifying Animayo International Film Festival in Gran Canaria, Spain, where it was awarded the "Special Mention of the Festival" and described as a "masterpiece" by the selection committee. The film continues to travel the festival circuit and counts Dr. Jane Goodall among its environmental supporters.

2) How did you get into directing?

In 2019, I graduated from NYU with an acting degree. In 2020, the pandemic upended my ability to perform, so I began teaching myself some of the basics of shooting and editing, while developing several scripts. One of those scripts was for *Tahlequah the Whale: A Dance of Grief*, and when Meinart Animation Studio agreed to enter into a co-production agreement with me, I became attached as the film's director.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Conceiving of a unique, expressive, perhaps radically beautiful vision, and marshaling a team of creatives towards the realization of that dream.



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The Kummerl Twins

Unaffiliated

BeReal's "The Sunday Scaries" (commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Our first professionally directed piece was a spec titled "The Night Shift" for Converse which harnessed our passion for playful visual storytelling and allowed us to apply our experience as production designers to create a colorful, whimsical narrative.

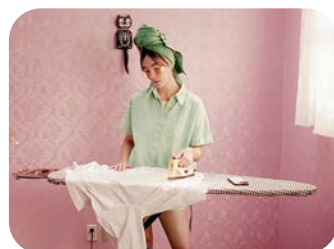
This piece allowed us to speak to the adolescent experience that we connect with and admire, and added a touch of surrealism as the world of the laundromat transforms into a checkered floor ballroom full of colors and confetti. This work was completed in May of 2022 (our junior year of college) and was a piece that established our voice as directors who aim

to connect with a Gen-Z generation through relatable, yet eye-catching narratives.

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

Our focus is directing commercials. As young Korean-Mexican women, we strive to catch the eyes of audiences through rich colors, strong production design, and youthful stories.

For us, directing heavily leans on strong visual design to bring a story to life. It is an opportunity to meld production design and directing into authentic storytelling.



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From The Class of 2019: Tamika Miller

Tamika Miller is an alum of SHOOT's 2019 New Directors Showcase, earning inclusion on the strength of an Amazon Echo spec spot facilitated by the Commercial Directors Diversity Program (CDDP). Fast forward to today and Miller has successfully transitioned into real world commercialmaking, episodic television and features. She broke into series TV with *Station 19* and that has expanded to such shows as *The Equalizer* and *Quantum Leap*. Miller's career progression can serve as a source of inspiration and strategy for up-and-coming filmmakers.

As to how she has landed these opportunities, Miller said, "I'm intentional in my professional endeavors. I also throw things against the wall to see if they stick. Both have benefited me professionally. An example is when I applied for a Women's Directing Mentorship Initiative sponsored by SeriesFest and Shondaland—the sole recipient of which shadows a director on a Shondaland series. I was the 2020 recipient. Tom Verica, head of creative production for Shondaland, was impressed with my work. At the time, in addition to commercials, I had three award-winning short films, and two television movies under my belt as a director. Tom said, 'You're not going to shadow. I'm going to give you an episode.' And, he did. I owe Tom my episodic career. It has been life-changing. Having already had quite a bit of experience being on sets—as a director, as well as a producer, the transition to episodic was a fairly smooth one in some ways. However, I did have to learn the process of making an episode of television. A lot goes into prep prior to filming, and it all moves very fast. So, I have to quickly get my head around the script and what the writer(s) are trying to convey in their storytelling. I have to figure out how I want to execute it, and be able to clearly articulate this to my creative team. When you're a [guest] director-for-hire invited onto a show where everyone knows each other—except you—confidence is key."



Tamika Miller

On the indie feature front Miller described her *Honor Student* as "a provocative thriller that is a call to action to invoke meaningful conversation in an effort to curtail gun violence. I co-wrote the script with a brilliant screenwriter, Joe Rechtman. The script was born out of a question I'd asked myself after every mass shooting in the U.S., 'what would it take for legislators to enact effective gun legislation?' I also wrote the script with the intention of producing the film myself. I knew whether it took two years, four years or six years to make, unfortunately the issue of gun violence would still be relevant. And, it is.

"My hope," continued Miller, "is that *Honor Student* is a catalyst for discussion and ACTION, however charged, and that our conversations reflect back to us who we are as a society and shifts—if ever so slightly—our perspective of who we need to be. I had complete creative control making *Honor Student*, and it felt empowering."

Up next for Miller is another feature she co-wrote, titled *Undercard*, with actress/comedienne Wanda Sykes in her first dramatic role. Sykes plays a boxing trainer who reconnects with the son she abandoned, and attempts to do what no mother has ever done—train her son to a world championship title. "No one will see this coming from Wanda!" said Miller of the gritty film.

When asked by SHOOT publisher Roberta Griefer about advice for new directors, Miller suggested, "lean into your fellow creatives—your friends who are writers, cinematographers, editors, production designers, etc.—coming up along side you. Create together instead of only looking outside or 'up' for someone to give you an opportunity. Create your own opportunities! Become one another's tribe because when one of you goes, you all go."

Miller's laundry list of advice includes: Be bold and fearless; never compare yourself to someone else—your journey is yours, not theirs; trust the process; trust your gut—your intuition; be intentional in everything you do; stay true to your vision; find balance and practice self-care; and have fun!

Nathalie Lamb, Jessica Makinson and Anthony Marinelli

Continued from page 18



Nathalie Lamb

Emerald Pictures

VITRA's "Heirloom" (commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

While studying directing, I had the opportunity to work on my first job, a commercial for PETA. The spot tells the story of the friendship between a young girl and her "best friend." I enjoyed working with the young girl and her vivid imagination, which was necessary for the shoot since we were not allowed to work with real animals. I collaborated with Mackvision to create a lifelike CG creature, resulting in a VES award nomination. This experience gave me the confidence to work with talented children and VFX in the future.

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

My main focus is on commercials directed with empathy and a love for detail. I find inspiration in working on different genres and formats as it allows me to bring new elements to my work. For instance, during the TV shoot for "Little Boxes," I expanded my acting direction, dialogue, and comedy work skills. In my documentary work, I have sharpened my observation and intuition. With stop-motion animation "Him And Her," I enjoy creating a world without boundaries for the imagination. And with "Henry," I loved to execute a visual style. I want to keep the diversity. In the long run, there are specific stories that I feel compelled to tell in a feature movie.



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Jessica Makinson

Unaffiliated

"@Here4theKids" (PSA)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

In 2022, I was able to shadow commercial director Jared Eberhardt on a series of spots for Pacific Source Health Care. He was so gracious in allowing me to contribute to the project in such a meaningful way that most shadowing directors aren't given the room to do. And ultimately, he gave me directing credit on a couple of them.

All of my films have been self-produced. The rest of my projects have been on spec and adopted later by organizations like @here4thekids.com.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

Collaboration is the best! I enjoy working with all departments in an open and collaborative way. I especially love working with actors, coming from an on-camera background, I have a special insight into what they need. Actors love to play so giving them a chance to do that is always a joy.



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Anthony Marinelli

Unaffiliated

Why I Had To Kill You While You Slept (trailer for the director's short film)

3) What is your most recent project?

My most recent project is a short film called *Why I Had To Kill You While You Slept*, which was just accepted into the Chelsea Film Festival and premiered October 15th. The idea came to me from my niece, Lisa Riva, while we were eating dinner at a Mexican restaurant and she told me that she and her best friend, Bradley, had always wanted to write a book called "Why I Had To Kill You While You Slept" (I wish I could take credit for the title, but I can't!) about all the terrible things their husbands do that make them want to kill them. I said, "Wait, that's a movie. Tell me more." So, here we are. I embellished a lot, but there are vignettes in the film that actually happened. They would tell me stories and I'd say, "Wait,

I gotta put that in."

It was a lot of fun to write and direct.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

The best part of being a director is building something from the ground up with a group of people who want the same thing. Whether it's the cast or the crew or the post production team, everyone is working towards the same goal, and helping you accomplish your vision. That's the most galvanizing thing — everyone on the same page creatively. I am always open to suggestions and am never threatened by an idea that's better than mine. I have no room for ego, I just want the end result to be the best it can be.



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We Support New Directors!

COMMERCIAL
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FILM SCHOOL

CommercialDirectingFilmSchool.com



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Directors Nixon Jr., Odufu

Continued from page 19



David Nixon Jr.
Unaffiliated
Lumps (excerpt from short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

For my first professional directing effort, I would mention the spec commercial I directed for Zara's fall/winter collection in 2020. I was able to pitch my concept to a local production company and closely work alongside them to produce a spec ad that gave me national recognition through an awards ceremony and allowed me to develop a relationship with the production house further. I'm most proud of this ad not only because of the quality and execution of everyone involved but also because we were able to make a great product at the height of the pandemic and display how our hard work, vision, and perseverance led an end product

that I'm proud to say I directed and others were proud to say they were a part of.

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

Currently, my career focus is commercials and branded content. I love what the space provides film directors and I think ads really give us an opportunity to sharpen our skills and develop new strengths that will go a long way for us. I plan on focusing on more drama and comedy-centered ads with fulfilling stories, that utilize visual effects and immersive art direction to enhance the audience experience and engagement.



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Chelsea Odufu
ChromistaTV
Chanel's "Pursuit of Home"
(branded entertainment)

2) How did you get into directing?

My journey into directing began at the remarkably early age of 14 when I discovered my profound desire to empower people of color through the lens of a camera. Eager to learn and immerse myself in the world of filmmaking, I actively sought out opportunities to develop my skills. This led me to apply for and ultimately gain acceptance into several prestigious pre-college film programs at esteemed institutions such as NYU and Parsons. These programs were transformative, offering me a hands-on education that allowed me to explore every facet of filmmaking, from crafting compelling narratives to mastering the technical aspects of the craft. Through these invaluable experiences, I not only honed my skills

but also discovered my passion for storytelling and directing, setting me on a lifelong journey dedicated to giving a voice to underrepresented communities and telling powerful stories through my unique perspective.

3) What is your most recent project?

My most recent brand project was a Bose Headphone holiday campaign. This campaign gave me the opportunity to merge two of my passions: chic, fashion-forward looks and music culture. I was able to craft exciting visuals that not only showcased the exceptional audio quality of Bose headphones but also incorporated the essence of contemporary fashion and the positive impact of music on our everyday lives.



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Lebensfeld To Preside Over Ghost VFX, Ingenuity



David Lebensfeld

Streamland Media has unified the leadership for Ghost VFX and Ingenuity Studios. David Lebensfeld, founder of Ingenuity Studios, will serve as president of both companies, which comprise Streamland Media's visual effects division. The two award-winning VFX houses have been creating groundbreaking work for a combined 40-plus years.

Ghost VFX, founded in 1999, has studios in London, Copenhagen, Los Angeles, Manchester, Toronto and Vancouver, and is moving its Pune studio into a new, state-of-the-art facility later this year. Recent Ghost VFX credits include titles such as *Star Trek Discovery*, *The Mandalorian* and *Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*.

Founded in 2004, Ingenuity Studios has turned out work which can be seen in the Netflix hit series *One Piece*, acclaimed feature films including *Many Saints of Newark* and *Booksmart*, and in Emmy®-nominated series such as *Hacks* and *Cowboy Bebop*. Headquartered in Los Angeles, Ingenuity Studios has locations in New York, Vancouver, London and Atlanta.

Lebensfeld brings 20 years of artistic, technical, and business experience in visual effects to his new role and is a member of the Visual Effects Society and the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

In addition to Ghost VFX and Ingenuity Studios, Streamland Media's offerings include customized services from its picture division, Picture Shop; sound division, Formosa Group; and marketing division, Picture Head.

Andy Williams Joins VisualCreatures As Sr. EP

VisualCreatures, a subsidiary of the Russo brothers' company AGBO, has appointed Andy Williams as sr. executive producer for virtual production, VFX and cinematics. A former executive of DNEG and Outpost VFX, Williams will helm business development and client strategy for VisualCreatures which just completed VFX work on *Citadel*, a series exec produced by the Russos, and virtual production services on the upcoming feature *The Electric State*, which was directed by the Russo brothers. At VisualCreatures Williams will be joining a team which includes founders Ryan McNeely and John Cranston, president Ian Unterreiner and industry visualization veteran Scott Meadows.



Andy Williams

With a focus on deploying realtime tools in service of narrative filmmaking and game cinematics, Williams will be fostering this mission by leveraging 15+ years in the VFX and virtual production space. His joining coincides with the recent investment in VisualCreatures' VizLab, a motion capture stage fully integrated with their realtime pipeline and LED volume.

"The opportunity that VisualCreatures offers its clients through its association with AGBO is entirely unique. No other provider of services within the space couples technical innovation with such a strong connection to creative storytellers who are constantly pushing the envelope," said Williams.

Unterreiner added, "Both respected by the teams he leads and trusted by the clients he has longstanding relationships with, Andy is the perfect fit to share with the world all the exciting things we are developing at VisualCreatures."

Annie Shaw Named EP for Virtual Production At Realtime

U.K.-based CGI and visual effects studio Realtime has appointed Annie Shaw as executive producer for virtual production.

Shaw joins Realtime from MPC where she was head of virtual production, and before that she was a virtual production and VFX producer working on a broad range of projects across film, TV, game cinematics, and trailers.

With Realtime, which has bases in Manchester, Lancashire, and London, Shaw will help support the growth of virtual production projects across the studio's games, episodic and automotive divisions.



Annie Shaw

Filmmakers Alex Ramsey, C.T. Robert and Danielle Shapira

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Alex Ramsey

Unaffiliated

Limbo (trailer for the director's documentary short)

On the other hand, Katz at Cosmo Street Editorial taught me the immense value of meticulous planning before embarking on a production or an edit. His wisdom underscored the significance of infusing intention into every facet of my work and the consistency of excellence planning ahead leads us to.

These contrasting perspectives have not only broadened my horizons as a director but have also enabled me to strike a harmonious balance between the serendipitous and the intentional in my filmmaking, ultimately enriching the quality of my work.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professionally directed work was a project for Filmsupply in August of 2022. Filmsupply funded my short documentary called *The Face of Fear*. The film is an investigation of what it takes to cultivate courage, in ways both subtle and extraordinary, and the potential that awaits on the other side of our greatest insecurities.

7) Have you a mentor and if so, who is that person (or persons) and what has been the lesson learned from that mentoring which resonates with you?

I've had the privilege of being mentored by two incredible creatives in my journey as a director, each imparting invaluable lessons that have left a profound impact on my approach to filmmaking.

Peter Sollett, the director of Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist and Raising Victor Vargas, instilled in me the belief that improvisation can yield breathtaking and unforeseen outcomes. His guidance emphasized the importance of embracing spontaneity and being open to the creative magic that unfolds in the moment.



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C.T. Robert

Partizan

SoundCloud's Scenes: SoCal Soul (excerpt from docuseries short)

2) How did you get into directing?

We're all just a ripple of those who came before us. While my grandfather would have never considered himself a director, he always had the camera on him and was documenting things (ie. Family events, holidays, etc.) I think it rubbed off on me, because I was always observant and taking note of the world around me. When I was 12 I remember finally attempting to make something when my friend Miles wanted to shoot a music video. It was the first time I remember trying to make something from inside my mind with the camera as my tool of choice. From there it was off to the races and a whole world opened up for me.

11) Have you had occasion to bring your storytelling/directorial talent to bear in the Metaverse, tapping into the potential of AR, VR, AI, NFTs and/or experiential fare? If so, tell us about that work and what lessons you have taken away from the experience?

I've done a couple VR shoots, one of the most significant being a NIKE FM program that I directed. I'm also currently creative directing an artist album rollout which will touch on this a bit in addition to including experimental components. With NIKE FM it was moreso creating a space that extended our set in the VR space. It was a dope experience thinking of ways outside of the tangible space to further illustrate the world we had created. Honestly, I'd love to work on more things that touch on that. The possibilities are endless. With regards to experiential, it's all very new for me, but I see it as just another opportunity to world build. Creative Direction is something I've been doing more and more of, and I think it's because it's essentially directing, but on a larger scale. So much of what we do as director's will end up living solely in a 2D space, but this aspect allows us to make it far more interactive for our audience and I'm all for this if it helps make our vision and story clearer for our audience.



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Danielle Shapira

Agent: the directors network

Production Company: Unaffiliated

Veritas' "Conquer Every Channel"

(video opening to

presentation event)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Does taking iPhone videos of my cats and selling them on Craigslist count?

2) How did you get into directing?

I was bad at every other position on a film set.

3) What is your most recent project?

The brilliant creative team at Deutsch LA turned up the heat this summer to relaunch their 2000s fan favorite Volcano Menu. To spice things up, they partnered with 2000s icon and THE Queen of What's Hot, Paris Hilton, to create a themed advice HOTline.

I was extremely fortunate to direct this dream of a campaign, consisting of (1) 30-second commercial, (1) TikTok, and (1) paparazzi-style video recreating a 2006 TMZ video of Paris leaving a Taco Bell. To say I was s'living was an understatement.

I worked closely with my production designer (shoutout to the amazing Sage Griffin) to build a hot pink and lava red millennium-meets-Taco Bell-inspired Hotline set, dialing up the early aughts nostalgia with corded landlines, bedazzled flip phones, and an inspirational poster of a Volcano that read, "Be Hot". I collaborated with Paris's personal stylists to custom-design a purple velour business suit, an elevated take on the Juicy Couture tracksuit that Paris made famous. Our queen sits at her desk, answering phones and enjoying her Volcano Meal, under a beautiful arched doorway, a nod to the Taco Bell arch that's so signature to the brand.

Could this experience have been any hotter? Maybe if there were Cheesy Fiesta Potatoes on set.

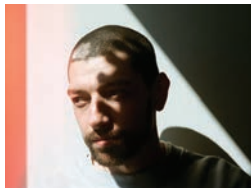


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Feedback From Filmmakers Sergii Shevtsov and Eli Snyder

Continued from page 21



Sergii Shevtsov

U.S.: Institute / Canada: Radke
Iz's "It's Cool To Be Glued"
(commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first solo project was a shoot for a Ukrainian sparkling wine. It had a simple storyline: four friends coming together to celebrate the end of COVID (although we later realized it was just the first wave).

Even though it's not entirely my style, I still have a fondness for this spot due to its light-heartedness and sincerity. Interestingly, COVID actually played a role in assembling a great team for it. Otherwise, they might have been too busy for a small project like this.

2) How did you get into directing?

I'm a former agency creative. Working on scripts and watching how directors brought them to life made me curious, and I really wanted to try it myself. At some point, a friend of mine, who was a director, kindly suggested that I collaborate with them on some projects to gain experience. That's how my directing career started.

3) What is your most recent project?

It's called "the list of stupid questions i ask myself when i'm high," and it premiered on Nowness.

It's a three-minute poetic short film about self-reflection and anxiety. I wrote it in Ukraine and kept it in my notes for a year and a half. Then, while living in Canada, I met a great DP, Luke McCutcheon, who inspired me to finally shoot it.



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Eli Snyder

Believe Media
Aves (trailer for the director's
short film)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

I graduated from the American Film Institute in May of 2022 and was brought on to direct the second unit of the Netflix feature film, *Rebel Moon*, shortly after.

2) How did you get into directing?

I started my career acting as a kid and slowly made my way behind the camera. In my teen years, I really benefited from iMovie and DSLR's making film super accessible. I didn't depend on anyone or much money to make stuff. I'd run inside and grab a camera to film a snail I had noticed, or record a ball bouncing and reverse it, or time lapse a sunset. Those intimate moments alone with a camera and a subject is what made me fall in love with filmmaking and directing.

10) Tell us about your background (i.e., where did you grow up? Past jobs?)

I grew up in Pasadena, California. I feel like I was raised on a set, whether it be watching from the side or acting myself. I then went to UCLA to study film and play football. My undergrad thesis film showed at festivals all over the country and ended up getting included in PBS' encore series. After that, I worked in the camera department on small jobs and I ultimately went back to grad school at the American Film Institute. I directed four short films including my thesis film *Aves*, and most recently, I directed the second unit for the Netflix feature film, *Rebel Moon*.



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2023 SHOOT NEW DIRECTORS SHOWCASE

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Megan Stowe, Sophie Tabet, Anthony Jamari Thomas



Megan Stowe

Unaffiliated

The Trevor Project's "Learn With Love" (excerpt from documentary short)

3) What is your most recent project?

My most recent projects were both for Pride in 2023. One of them, "Stories of Pride: The Power of Us," delves into the LGBTQ+ community's unwavering support, affirmation, and inspiration for each other. The other, "Styles of Pride: Fashion Forward," was a collaboration with Macy's, celebrating how fashion has the power to reshape narratives, propel society forward, and help us recognize ourselves. Currently, I'm in the final development stages of my upcoming short film and actively exploring various financing options. The film centers on the themes of grief and acceptance as a father embarks on a transformative journey to support his daughter's identity.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My directorial debut started with The Trevor Project's "Every Single One" campaign, which I directed in November 2022. This project featured LGBTQ+ young individuals reading heartfelt letters to those who played a pivotal role in their journey of self-discovery. Before this, I had taken on directorial responsibilities for numerous projects, although I did not officially hold the title of director.

2) How did you get into directing?

My path to directing was a natural progression, fueled by a lifelong passion for human-centric storytelling. After college, I entered the world of television development, immersing myself in all facets of production, including producing. However, my heart always gravitated toward directing. It was during my tenure as VP, brand & content at The Trevor Project that I wholeheartedly embraced this role. This transformative experience solidified my calling as a director, where I used the power of storytelling to bridge gaps and highlight the richness of diverse human experiences.



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Sophie Tabet

Unaffiliated

Alfa Romeo's "The Thrill of Indulgence" (branded content)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first professionally directed work was for Amazon Prime in February of 2022. The video was a how-to on throwing your very own drag brunch at home, and it featured the fabulous Miss Peppermint. Funnily enough, back when I was at NYU, I used to go watch her perform on "Peppermint Mondays" at a drag club called Barracuda in NYC. I was delighted to have the opportunity to work with her!

2) How did you get into directing?

I've loved films since I was a child and for as long as I can remember, I've always seen my own life like a movie. But practically speaking, I do have one distinct memory of the moment it became clear: I was in an after school acting program, and during the first rehearsal of "Lemony Snicket: A Series of Unfortunate Events," my teacher pulled me aside and asked me if I wouldn't rather sit with her instead. She felt that I was better suited for "this side of the camera," which not only confirmed how awkward I felt acting but also finally made everything click for me. And that was it, I was hooked. I "co-directed" the play at age 13 and never looked back!



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

4) What is the best part of being a director?

There are so many great parts about being a director... but the very best is being able to share an audio-visual snippet of what is going on in my brain. It's having the opportunity to tell stories, to share perspective, to challenge norms and ultimately to change the status quo.



Anthony Jamari Thomas

Scheme Engine

Scarr's Pizza and Psyche Organics "Man U Betta..." (commercial)

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

My first directorial work was completed in January 2021. The work is entitled *Hood Prophets*. *Hood Prophets* is an intimate portrait of first generation, West African creatives Modibo 'Minx\$' Sy and Mamadou 'Dusse' Doumbouya. An excerpt that profiles their heritage, practice of their Islamic faith and the Harlem community that continues to serve as the backdrop of their pursuit to sow change, love and service to others. Although presented conceptually, the film grounds itself in the truth, that love is a language spoken and harbored by many, peace as a virtue of intention and the concept of community, as a well for replenishment as well as reflection.

2) How did you get into directing?

I landed on directing through loss, grief and developing ways to monument those I love. I have always been a child of media, eager to see the primetime lineup of ABC or a geeking out on how the 8pm slot of Nickelodeon in the '90s flowed so well — blending marketing, content and quality into a block that still permeates into my work until this day. TV continues to have a strong influence on my practice, particularly my desire to create authentic/diverse stories, within the confines of advertisement while developing projects that portrait humanity even with the charge of selling a brand/product.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

6) What is your current career focus: commercials and branded content, television, movies? Do you plan to specialize in a particular genre—comedy, drama, visual effects, etc.?

I am currently focused on branded content, shorts and feature films.

Julien & Justen Turner; Wang

Continued from page 23



Julien & Justen Turner

Invisible Collective

Nike X Social Status "Recess," Part 2 of 3 (excerpt from short film)

Since then, we've shot four A Ma Maniere X Air Jordan short stories and four Social Status X Nike short stories.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

Our first professionally directed work was in January of 2021 when we landed our first brand commercial gig with A Ma Maniere as they launched their new sneaker deal with Air Jordan.

James Whitner hired us as directors with the intention to shoot narrative films in collaboration with each of their shoes drops. We would go on to shoot "Raised by Women," a short narrative dedication to Black women and their impacts on our community.

<https://hypebeast.com/2021/3/a-ma-maniere-air-jordan-3-raised-by-women-short-film>

3) What is your most recent project?

Our most recent project is an upcoming installation of the Taco Bell campaign with Devante Adams. It is airing this fall during NFL football games.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

The best part about being a director is seeing a vision from the start to the finish line. Throughout our career, we've been intentional about learning and studying each and every creative wing of the filmmaking process, from music to art direction. So being able to see each part of the process come to fruition is amazing.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)



Boson Wang

Unaffiliated

"词典 - The Dictionary" (documentary short)

would pay dividends. Clients eventually would reach out saying they want a spot feeling like this or like this, allowing me to direct.

1) What was your first professionally directed work and when was it?

I was shooting mini-docs on my friends who were MMA fighters and after I released little snippets online I got a call from Combate Americas, a large MMA promotion in Latin America, wanting to air it. The rest is history.

2) How did you get into directing?

It's been a long road. I've always wanted to direct but I had no experience. After I moved to LA I started working in the camera & G/E departments on AFI sets and started shooting my own things. These passion projects

3) What is your most recent project?

Three docu-style vignettes for REDF, a non profit focusing on social enterprise. We focused on the comeback: how incarcerated individuals can make a comeback in not only reintegrating, but becoming CEO's of their own companies.

4) What is the best part of being a director?

The best part of directing is the people you meet. Crew members. Clients. Agency. You meet a diverse range of people who slowly grow to become lifelong friends.



[CLICK TO VIEW FULL PROFILE & THE WORK](#)

Music Notes

Lavezzoli, Dubin Join Racket Club

Bicoastal audio post studio Racket Club bolsters its newly established presence in Southern California with the addition of executive producer Adrea Lavezzoli and sound designer and mixer Nathan Dubin. Since its inception in 2019, Rack-



Lavezzoli (l) and Dubin

et Club has turned out work for such clients as Impossible Foods, Volvo, BMW, Toyota, Benjamin Moore, and Google. As Racket Club continues to grow with a new state-of-the-art studio in Culver City, Calif., Lavezzoli and Dubin bring their decades of experience to the L.A. market.

Dubin started sculpting soundwaves as a teenager, writing and recording music. His career as a sound designer and mixer began shortly after that, with a career spanning the past few decades. With a Clio Award for his work scoring commercials, Dubin's versatile sonic style can be heard on many global spots for brands like Kia, Pepsi, Universal Studios, Toyota, Jack In The Box, and more.

EP Lavezzoli has a diverse and storied career producing music and sound that includes thousands of commercials, collaborating with Will Ferrell on *Anchorman 2*, working with professional football players on EA Madden NFL games, and recording a New Orleans band in the historic United Recording Studios. Previously at Beacon Street Studios, Lavezzoli later worked at Netflix during the pandemic before joining Racket Club. Lavezzoli's work has been nominated for AICP and Clio awards, with her work on the opening credits for the comedy series *Spoils of Babylon* earning an Emmy nomination.

Racket Club creates sound for picture. Its sister company is Uppercut, a creative postproduction boutique in New York, Atlanta, and Los Angeles.

Mr. Bronx Launches Facility

Audio post studio Mr. Bronx has relocated from its SoHo site and opened a 12,500-square-foot facility in the heart of NYC's Flatiron district. The combined studio and office space pairs advanced audio rooms and technologies with custom-built accommodations to meet agency and brand client needs.

Led by founder and mixer David Wolfe and exec producer Hanna Choi, Mr. Bronx and its new studio rooms have already been home to work on campaigns for Adidas, Coca-Cola, American Express, LG, Sephora, Kia, and the ACLU; Super-



Hanna Choi

cell games such as *Clash of Clans* and *Brawl Stars*; and the trailer for Hayao Miyazaki's *The Boy and the Heron*, which opens in the U.S. come December. Senior sound designers/mixers Eric Hoffman and Geoff Strasser additionally have created the soundscapes for an experiential motion ride and two documentary films: *Lakota Nation vs. United States*, an IFC

Films release and a *New York Times* Critic's Pick this summer; and *Boil Alert*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival last month. Other TV and film credits include Beyonce's *Black Is King*, *Homecoming* and *Lemonade*; HBO's *Random Acts of Flyness* and *2 Dope Queens*; Hulu's *Ramy*; FX's *Welcome to Wrexham*, and film premieres at the Venice, Tribeca, Sundance, and SXSW Film Festivals.

Mr. Bronx's audio bays feature two 7.1.4 Dolby Atmos control rooms with isolation booths and a third room configured for 5.1 surround. Studio A includes a 160-inch projection screen and projector, while all three rooms connect to the 145-sq-foot ADR stage via Dante audio networking and live webcam feeds. The audio engineers utilize OBS to screencast visuals from multiple sources in a custom layout, meaning clients on Zoom can view screenshares of picture references alongside webcam feeds of the control room and talent booths all at once. The strategic room configurations allow clients to quickly plug in audio from their laptops to the speaker system, while wired and wireless talkback remotes and mics are at all three listening positions of the main control rooms. These features come together to provide an elevated listening experience.

Choi joined Mr. Bronx in 2021 as EP, connecting with Wolfe who founded the studio in 2011. As a part of Alanda Ltd, Mr. Bronx's sister companies include BANDIT Editorial, BUTTER Music and Sound, Honor Society, and Scout Design and Animation.

Lensing *The Holdovers*, *She Came to Me* and *Our Flag Means Death*

One Emmy-winning cinematographer collaborated for the first time with feature filmmaker Alexander Payne.

Another DP sought and got a return engagement with writer-director Rebecca Miller.

And our third cinematographer helped to create and evolve the visual language of a queer pirate action-adventure romantic comedy series over two seasons, starting with the pilot directed by Taika Waititi.

Here are insights from lensers Eigil Bryld on *The Holdovers* (Focus Features), Sam Levy on *She Came to Me* (Vertical Entertainment), and Mike Berlucchi on *Our Flag Means Death* (Max).

Eigil Bryld

The chance to work with director Alexander Payne for the first time—and to do so on a film that takes us back to the 1970s—made *The Holdovers* an irresistible proposition for cinematographer Eigil Bryld. Originally Bryld was to have teamed with Payne on earlier prospective projects which wound up falling through. But happily the stars finally aligned for *The Holdovers*. During the process of discussing the proposed projects that didn't come to fruition, Bryld developed a kinship with Payne whose work he had long admired. As for the allure of the '70s, Bryld grew up watching movies from that time and they helped to shape his storytelling sensibilities. He was inspired by the humanity, playfulness, mood, texture, natural lighting and characters in such '70s films as director Hal Ashby's *The Landlord* and *The Last Detail*, and Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation*.

Payne wasn't looking to just make a film set in the '70s. He

wanted it to feel like a movie made during that time. Bryld became enamored with that goal and became a key part of that quest.

The Holdovers takes us back to a New England boarding school over winter break in 1970. Paul Giamatti stars as Paul Hunham, an adjunct professor of ancient history who gets stuck with the task of being held over at Barton Academy with those kids who can't go home for Christmas. The curmudgeonly professor is generally disliked by his students but through circumstance he bonds with a held-over lad, Angus Tully (portrayed by Dominic Sessa in

his feature debut). Also at Barton during the holidays is the school's head cook, Mary Lamb (Da'Vine Joy Randolph), whose only child Curtis, a recent Barton grad, was killed in the Vietnam War. Hunham, Tully and Lamb become an unlikely trio who together find a semblance of family—something they either tragically had lost or never truly had before.

Bryld similarly characterizes working with Payne as being part of a film family. It's a family that comes together to find the best ways to tell a story. While Payne has a clear vision, Bryld said the director is open to ideas and new wrinkles emerging from collaboration. Bryld re-

lated that “rather than forcing a particular sort of stringent way of looking” at something, Payne embarks on an exploration with his team to “find the movie.” The locations, for example, can spark a new direction, pointed out Bryld who recalled being on location at a bowling alley, which helped to shape a scene. Payne saw the need to write part of a scene again with the location in mind. “It's an intuitive process—one that also involves having a lot of fun” as

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DPs Eigil Bryld, Sam Levy and Mike Berlucchi shed light on their work, directorial collaborators

By Robert Goldrich



From top left, clockwise: Eigil Bryld; Sam Levy (center, seated); Mike Berlucchi; and a scene from *The Holdovers* with Dominic Sessa (l) as Angus Tully and Paul Giamatti as Paul Hunham.

Lensing The Holdovers

Continued from page 25

time is spent together to consider other possibilities.

Making a movie the way it was done in the '70s posed challenges. "Film stock today has become sort of digitized, made to go into the digital space," observed Bryld. So shooting film today would not be the same as it had been back in the day. Bryld said that he and Payne worked hard very early on toward how to get the "contrast and grain, those characteristics and imperfections that the movies from that era had." Bryld noted that "oddly enough, shooting digital and giving it a full makeover" later to bring those imperfections into the equation turned out to be the best option.

Bryld went with the ARRI Alexa camera coupled with H Series Panavision lenses. He realized that *The Holdovers* wasn't necessarily about using the same film stock or the lighting of a time gone by. Bryld noted

have my work be about my own vanity or my own ego," he shared, acknowledging at the same time that "we all want to be loved, cherished, applauded and whatever." But the process of making this movie not only with Payne but artists such as editor Kevin Tent, ACE and production designer Ryan Warren Smith—communicating with them daily—reaffirmed for Bryld the importance of serving the story and its characters, prioritizing "what we were actually trying to bring to life." In that regard, he views *The Holdovers* as "a turning point" for him, "an experience with a lot of gravity" that will inform his future work—as well as his love for the work.

The Holdovers adds to a feature filmography for Bryld which also includes Martin McDonough's *In Bruges* with Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson. On the TV front, Bryld won an Emmy for his lensing for an episode of *House of Cards*—and was nomi-



A scene from *The Holdovers*

that "rather than going in and replicating the techniques of the era," he and Payne found the journey to be much more about having the freedom and playfulness with the material to capture the spirit of the 1970s in terms of cinematic feel.

In that same vein, a film historian might have recommended shooting *The Holdovers* in a 1.85 aspect ratio, which was more typical in '70s movies. Instead Bryld and Payne chose 1.66, "a little more square" skewing towards a European preference, noted the DP. This, continued Bryld, was "a little more intimate, a little more vertical" and "suited the story better," capturing the '70s feel that Payne sought.

Bryld's experience on *The Holdovers* impacted him. "I've always strived to not

nated for another for *You Don't Know Jack*.

Sam Levy

Cinematographer Sam Levy was immediately drawn to *She Came to Me*. He loved the script. But beyond that, he became enamored with two prime opportunities the feature film presented—being able to not only reunite with writer-director Rebecca Miller but also to try his hand at staging, lighting and lensing a couple of operas within the context of the story.

On the former score, Levy some eight years ago shot *Maggie's Plan*, a feature helmed and co-written by Miller. The collaboration between DP and writer-director was artistically and personally gratifying as

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Vodafone Studios Boosts A-V Production Via Blackmagic

A keystone of the 400m2 creative production environment designed and built by Vodafone Germany and systems integrator Sigma-AV is a 15m curved LED wall for virtual production. Conceived as an idea in 2020, work to implement this project began in mid-2022, with the space just coming online. "There was a clear will internally to become masters of our own content creation," stated Lukas Loss, digital content producer at Vodafone Germany.



Vodafone Germany studio

"Previously, we have delivered a vast amount of video, event delivery and TVC production using external studios and partners. That production was expensive and lacked flexibility," according to Loss. "With the building of our own studios, we could lower production costs and preparation time while simultaneously raising the scope of what our trained production team could deliver internally. Through the pandemic and beyond, we soon realized that virtual meetups and hybrid event delivery would offer a more flexible model for conferences in the future. As a tech company, we wanted to build a state of the art, future proof studio with extended reality (XR) that would allow that. But beyond that, creating an XR studio with an LED wall and green screen space unlocks new creative possibilities internally."

A 15m curved LED wall for XR live production and events is at the heart of the main space. It also features a lounge area for talking heads or interviews, a master control room (MCR) for eight operators and a server room. The second studio area is a smaller green screen space with a pack shot area and an audio-visual podcast studio designed for up to four people.

Blackmagic Design was selected as one of the preferred hardware partners for video. Vodafone elected to deploy the URSA Broadcast G2 camera for its versatility. "We get the best of both worlds; 4K broadcast style live production for streaming or 6K cinematic production with shallow depth of field," said Loss.

Combined with Blackmagic Fiber Converters, each camera channel requires just two cables: one for the camera, another for the tracking system. The remaining challenge for Loss was ensuring production didn't run into moiré issues.

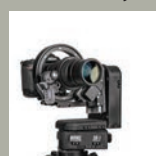
"We conducted testing to determine which type of cameras and LED resolutions would fit our budget, avoid any moiré and still give us the best image quality possible. In Blackmagic and Samsung, we have found the ideal combination to balance those requirements."

Supplementing those is a Blackmagic Studio Camera 4K Pro paired with the Blackmagic Studio Converter and a 21" teleprompter screen. In the control room, an ATEM Constellation 8K live production switcher and ATEM 2 M/E Advanced Panel run the show, with a Smart Videohub 12G 40x40 for routing video and remote camera control via an ATEM Camera Control Panel.

MRMC Launches SR-1 Camera Robot

MRMC, a Nikon Company that provides camera robotics solutions, has launched the SR-1, a pan-tilt head designed for use in locations that are inaccessible or hazardous for camera operators. The system is designed as a next-generation, remote production tool that will enhance the creativity of shots, help capture new angles and easily achieve shots that would be "impossible" by hand.

The compact lightweight SR-1 is easy to transport, set up, mount, and control. It is compatible with Nikon cameras including the Z9, D5 and D6. The head has an axis speed of 30 degrees per second and a pan range of approximately 120 degrees. The system is camera and lens-agnostic, giving users more choice and flexibility to use equipment they already own. The SR-1 has full IP control, is controllable via MRMC's MHC or third-party systems and is compatible with MRMC's Polymotion Chat automated tracking software.



MRMC's SR-1

Paddy Taylor, head of broadcast solutions for MRMC, said the SR-1 is "perfect for use in situations where it is difficult or dangerous for a human operator to be present, such as in hazardous environments or at great heights. The SR-1 is also a great option for capturing dynamic shots that would be difficult to achieve manually."

DP Sam Levy Reunites With Writer-Director Rebecca Miller

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Levy found a kindred spirit in Miller whom he described as “an incredibly creative inventive filmmaker, artist and thinker.”

Originally Levy and Miller were to have teamed again much sooner. Miller after all had written the script for *She Came to Me* not too long after shooting had ended on *Maggie's Plan*. Production of *She Came to Me* was slated to get underway a couple of years after *Maggie's Plan* wrapped. But circumstances intervened and the stars didn't realign for some time. Still Levy was happy they finally did as Miller and he eventually embarked on a delicious hybrid form that's part romance, part offbeat comedy, part drama and part fairy tale—with all these genres somehow converging to shed light on matters of the heart and creative soul.

Well received upon making its world premiere in February at the Berlin International Film Festival, *She Came to Me* had its U.S. theatrical release in early October. The film introduces us to Steven Lauddem (portrayed by Peter Dinklage), a composer who is suffering from a severe case of writer's block. At the urging of his wife Patricia (played by Anne Hathaway), he ventures out in search of a creative spark and finds it during a walk through the Brooklyn waterfront, meeting Katrina (Marisa Tomei), an off-the-wall tugboat captain. A fleeting carnal encounter between them on her boat makes Katrina his muse of sorts, inspiring Lauddem to pen an opera based on her. The new opera is a hit, bringing Lauddem out of career doldrums—but causing another struggle within the composer, exacerbated when Katrina by chance attends a performance of the opera and then re-

enters his life. Meanwhile Patricia has her own self-doubts, hiding her crisis beneath a veil of tranquility. Furthermore, Steven and

The DP observed that Miller's approach to both opera and storytelling reflects how disciplined she is as a filmmaker. And Levy

ford Young, ASC, the lenses captured what Levy described as “a certain softness and quality of light flare that suited this material.” Levy added, “We explored shooting film on this project but it wasn't meant to be. Logistically and economically it didn't make sense for us.” Shooting digitally with Alexa provided some of the filmic sensibilities to which Levy aspired.

Levy also opted to shoot half the film in 2.39:1 wide screen aspect ratio, the rest in 1.37:1. He explained that different thematic parts of the story told in the movie correspond to wide screen while others are best told in square format. For example, the square format suited the tight interiors of the tugboat captained by Tomei's character. Lensing took place on an actual tugboat.

Levy's first major feature was the Kelly Reichardt-directed *Wendy and Lucy*, which was nominated for Best Picture at the 2008 Spirit Awards. Levy went on to shoot features such as *Frances Ha* and *Mistress America* for director Noah Baumbach who wrote them with Greta Gerwig. Additionally Gerwig starred in both films—as well as *Maggie's Plan*—and over time she and the DP became close-knit collaborators. This extended to Gerwig's feature directorial debut, *Lady Bird*, nominated for five Oscars.

Mike Berlucchi

An ASC Award winner last year for lensing (with Marc Carter) an episode of *Mythic Quest*, Mike Berlucchi returns for *Our Flag Means Death*, season two of which rolled out earlier this month, a year and a half after the first season wrapped. Berlucchi had a major hand in visually shaping the series

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Photo courtesy of Venice

Peter Dinklage in a scene from *She Came to Me*

Patricia's 18-year-old son Julian (Evan A. Ellison) falls in love with 16-year-old Tereza (Harlow Jane), a relationship which threatens to jeopardize both their futures due to the girl's overly zealous father.

Miller wrote two operas to support the narrative. Levy collaborated with her, composer Bruce Desner, production designer Kim Jennings and an ensemble of singers. The DP loved working on opera, helping in the design of intricate theatrical set pieces. “I came away with even more of an appreciation for what opera represents,” he shared.

Levy fed off the challenge of staging, lighting and lensing two operas. But the overriding challenge was presenting opera within a feature film “in a way that honors the opera,” he affirmed. First and foremost beyond the opera, though, was doing justice to the love and life stories realized by a rich cast of characters in the film.

was motivated by and mirrored that discipline as he came together with her. “I like to sit down with a director as early as possible and go through the script page by page and break it down, make a list of shots and start talking about the color palette.” He cited Miller's rigorous preparation and “fantastic color sense.”

This thoroughly planned approach, however, is not the be-all and end-all, continued Levy. While Miller is totally prepared and has a clear vision, she does not allow herself to be bogged down by military-like precision, related Levy. She is also driven by “the poetry of the story.” Levy observed that Miller is adept at finding the proper mix of “poetry and precision,” collaborating with others toward that end.

Levy deployed the ARRI Alexa LF and Tribe 7 Blackwing lenses on *She Came to Me*. Developed by cinematographer Brad-

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Monsters Take Vancouver on Friday the 13th! Over 400 Industry Pros Celebrate Grand Opening – and bloody ribbon-cutting – of MastersFX Monster Museum and Studio, located in Burnaby, Vancouver, BC, Canada!

Edited by Union's Marco Perez, 'In The Fire' Opens In The U.S. IN THE FIRE - the latest feature edited by Marco Perez, a Partner/Editor at bicoastal Union - hits select theaters across the country this month. It will also be available for streaming nationwide. Directed by Conor Allyn, the supernatural thriller stars Amber Heard, Eduardo Noriega and Luca Calvani. **The Platform Group Puts Final Touches on "BUONA SERA SIGNORINA"** The Platform Group's creative studio 'El Oso' puts the final touches on the "BUONA SERA SIGNORINA" music video for the iconic original strolling band, The Gypsy Queens. The new album's flagship song and music video, "BUONA SERA SIGNORINA," promoting the upcoming release of The Gypsy Queens'...

ALIBI Enlists Award-Winning K-Pop Writer For Production Music Responding to a growing need for authentic Korean pop music for on-screen projects, ALIBI Music enlisted one of the genre's top songwriters to help create its newest K-pop production music. Darren Ellis Smith is an award-winning composer and Billboard charter, who has over 80 major label...

Stephen Arnold Music Underscores Its Unique Vision For Sonic Branding In AI-Assisted Creative Reel Underscoring its mastery of one of the most powerful forms of consumer engagement, Stephen Arnold Music has produced a new creative reel combining cutting-edge sonic branding with dazzling, AI-generated animation. The reel was created in association with transmedia company Elevate Pictures.

The Refinery, South Africa's Leading Post Production House Signs With Alta Global Media South African post production house The Refinery has signed with Alta Global Media for representation. Recent work for The Refinery includes the TIFF 2023 Official Selection *The Umbrella Man 2... Escape from Robben Island*, and the international hit series *Blood and water* currently streaming on Netflix.

Charlie Uniform Tango and Prelude Films Collaborate on New Work For PBR Top 30 Charlie Uniform Tango and Prelude Films worked together on two, hour-long TV episodes for the Professional Bull Riders league's PBR Top 30. One episode focuses on the top 30 riders and one on the top 30 bulls.

Shelter Film and Indochina Productions Join JW Collective Partner Roster Shelter Film joins JW Collective's worldwide roster of service production giants and Indochina Productions (ICP), Asia's Leading Production Service Specialist. **Union's Marco Perez Helps The LEGO Group Celebrate The Incredible Power of Play** The LEGO Group has released its new *Play Is Your Superpower* campaign featuring the brand's first ever fully playable brand film, which celebrates the heroes that can emerge in a world that has forgotten how to play. It will run for four months.

Rising Commercial Production and Post Company Bella Lands Maureen Butler For Representation In U.S. Midwest EP David Perry and his colleagues from commercial production and post company Bella announced the start of their representation agreement with Maureen "Mo" Butler, the founder of Chicago-based Mo Butler Reps.

Festive New Production Music From ALIBI Kicks off Holiday Season Pass the spiked eggnog, get cozy and listen up: the holidays are fast approaching and ALIBI Music has editors covered with the release of five festive Christmas albums. **Alt_Mix Makes a Move To Union Square, Sets Up Shop at MassiveMusic's New York Digs** While New Yorkers still lament the closing of Coffee Shop on Union Square West, producers can be cheered by the news that Alt_Mix, the boutique audio post and sound design studio launched by Cory Melious last year, is moving into the neighborhood.

charlieuniformtango and TRG Team Up For SEC Charlie Uniform Tango and TRG teamed up for a new :30 spot for the SEC titled, "More Than a Football." Directors Andy Mahr & Ashton Rodgers deliver a powerful message with a strong black and white spot for the Southeastern Conference (SEC). **Jimmy Marbles' "What On Earth" Unearths The High Price of Disconnection** The Short Film Premiered on Nowness Jimmy Marbles' latest film, *What on Earth*, a short that highlights the complexities and anxieties of living in the digital world through analog spaces, premiered on Nowness Friday, September 15th.

"Tonic" Strikes a Perfect Chord: A Deep Ellum-Infused Cinematic Triumph In the heart of Deep Ellum, a historic district pulsating with life, "Tonic" unfolds as a cinematic masterpiece. Tonic is an homage to the cinema of the late 70s and early '80s drawing inspiration from John Cassavetes' *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* and Martin Scorsese's *Afterhours*.

The Sweetshop Signs Filmmaking Wonder Colin Read Colin Read has been signed by The Sweetshop who will now represent him in Asia, Australia, and New Zealand respectively. The acclaimed indie film director made a strong impression with his feature skate film, *Tengu: God of Mischief*, followed closely by the noteworthy *Spirit Quest*.

Boris FX Optics 2024 Brings Cinematic Eye-Candy To Adobe Photoshop Boris FX Optics makes it simple to transform photos and still images into mesmerizing works of art from the fantastical to glossy. The 2024 release includes over 180 effects, powerful masking tools, and thousands of presets. One...

Maxon Collaborates With Adobe To Unveil Limited-Time Bundle Maxon announced a uniquely priced bundle that brings together the power of Maxon One and Adobe Substance 3D. This limited-time offer is poised to redefine the creative landscape by providing artists, designers, and 3D enthusiasts with an unparalleled toolkit.

Ateliere and qibb Partner To Enable Turnkey Hybrid Storage Integration For The Modern Media Supply Chain Ateliere Creative Technologies, a leading developer of cloud-native media supply chain solutions and a 2023 "IDC Innovator," has announced a partnership with media application integration specialists, qibb, to support hybrid storage workflows across the media supply chain.

Maxon One Fall Release Includes New Features and Massive Performance Improvements Maxon, developers of professional software solutions for editors, filmmakers, motion designers, visual effects artists and creators of all types, announced the highly anticipated September release with updates for nearly all Maxon products.

Easy Mondays Director Luis Gerard Discovers New York For Con Edison Created by Code and Theory, produced by Easy Mondays and directed by Luis Gerard, Con Edison's new campaign is set in the "clean energy future."

Sony Electronics Announced "BURANO," The Newest Addition To Sony's CineAlta Family of Digital Cinema Cameras. Sony Electronics Inc. announced the new BURANO camera, an exciting new model from their CineAlta lineup of digital cinema cameras. **Stephen Arnold Music Sets the Emotional Tone For KRQE's "KRQE Cares"**

Stephen Arnold Music recently teamed with KRQE on an inspirational original theme song for the Albuquerque television station's KRQE Cares campaign. Making a Difference is being used in promos and other marketing media supporting the annual fundraiser.

Get Your Motor Running: The Sound of "Gran Turismo: Based on a True Story" *Gran Turismo: Based on a True Story*, the new film from Sony Pictures and Director Neill Blomkamp, is based on the unbelievable true story of a team of unlikely underdogs – a struggling working-class gamer (Archie Madekwe), a failed former racecar driver (David Harbour), and an idealistic motorsport executive (Orlando Bloom). Together, they risk it all to take on the most elite sport in the world.

Union ATX & NY Show 'How Texas Orders In' for Favor and Preacher If you've lived in Texas for any amount of time, you know about Favor. For those who've recently moved to the Lone Star State, this campaign serves as a primer of sorts: first thing you need to know is that Texans love ordering from the Favor restaurant delivery app.

Camp K Announced Coaches Roster for the 2023 Competition With the entry deadline for AICP's Camp Kuleshov trailer competition approaching, the emerging creatives who are busy crafting their entries now have a great resource to turn to, as Camp K has announced its lineup of Coaches available for mentoring and creative counseling.

Commercial Production Company Cap Gun Signs Award-Winning Director Alex Grossman Well-versed in the commercial world, Alex Grossman began as a copywriter in the Bay Area first at Butler, Shine & Stern and later at Goodby, Silverstein & Partners. After a decade of creating award-winning work for brands like E*Trade, eBay, and Got Milk?, Alex pivoted to commercial directing and made a name for himself in the comedy space.

Maxon Introduces Cinebench 2024 Maxon, developers of professional software solutions for editors, filmmakers, motion designers, visual effects artists and creators of all types, announced the highly anticipated release of Cinebench...



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Berlucchi Returns For Season 2 Of Our Flag Means Death

Continued from page 27

from the outset and then evolving it further in the new season, having shot five episodes in season one—including the pilot directed by Taika Waititi.

Created by showrunner David Jenkins and exec produced by Waititi, the period action romance comedy (opening in the year 1717) introduces us to Stede Bonnet (Rhys Darby), a man who abandoned his wife and kids for a pirate's life on the high seas. The series takes a romantic turn when Stede, aka the Gentleman Pirate, finds his soulmate in Blackbird (Waititi). Their on-again-off-again relationship brings a queer love story to the fore. Bonnet, though, winds up back with his estranged family only to conspire with wife Mary (Claudia O'Doherty) to fake his death so she can inherit his fortune and he can return to Blackbeard. In the last words of season one, she describes

color into this world, to keep it kind of light and fun. Season one was shot nearly entirely inside, leading Berlucchi to keep what he described as a sort of "proscenium" feel—at times leaning into theatrical elements such as backdrops, cardboard cutouts in the distance after brainstorming with Vincent and concluding that not everything had to be rooted in the building out of massive sets.

Berlucchi and Cynthia Pusheck were the cinematographers on season one. They tested cameras and lenses and ultimately went with the ARRI Alexa Mini LF with Panavision PanaSpeed lenses. "We knew we wanted it to have as big of a feel as we could give it," said Berlucchi about shooting in large format. The series also deployed an LED wall the size of a football field.

Berlucchi described season one as much lighter, more colorful in a way than season two. However, as Blackbird and Bonnet's

relationship he's forged on the show, "new friendships and all these people on the other side of the world that I would have never had the opportunity to meet—whom I now consider close friends." Over a relatively short period of time, "you become a family," he observed.

Flash Back

October 31, 2018 Commonwealth//McCann, McCann Worldgroup's globally dedicated agency of record for Chevrolet, has named **Todd Riddle** as its chief creative officer, global markets. Riddle will be based out of the agency's Detroit headquarters, and will oversee all creative work worldwide for the Chevrolet brand. Riddle will partner with CCO **Gary Pascoe**, who will continue to lead all U.S. creative for Commonwealth//McCann, and **Matt Canzano**, EVP, deputy global CCO, Commonwealth//McCann, who has been instrumental in advancing the agency's General Motors business. Riddle is joining the team as **Greg Braun** announced that he will be stepping down as deputy, global CCO at Commonwealth//McCann, and retiring from advertising after 25 years in the business.... Director **Luke Monaghan** has joined the rosters of two **Ridley Scott Creative Group** companies—**RSA Films** for commercial representation in the U.S., and **Black Dog Films** for music videos and non-traditional content, also in the U.S.... Filmmakers **Maggie Carey**, **Ben Sinclair** and **Bo Burnham**, who have each garnered recognition in TV and features, are extending their creative reach into commercials and branded content for the first time, signing with **Caviar** for global representation....

October 28, 2013 Production company **B-Reel** has added director **Kief Davidson** to its commercialmaking roster. He comes over from **Believe Media** and earlier this year earned a Best Short Subject Documentary Oscar nomination for *Open Heart*, which centers on eight Rwandan children who embark on a life-or-death journey to Sudan in order to have high-risk heart surgery performed at The Salam Centre, Africa's only hospital offering free cardiac procedures for families in need. *Open Heart* is now airing on HBO.... Director **Adam Hashemi**—fresh off his *The Developer*, a short film for Samsung out of **Leo Burnett**, Chicago, produced while he was at **Furlined**—has joined **Reset** for commercial representation in North America. Reset is the production house/content company launched in summer of 2012 by veteran exec **Dave Morrison** and director **David Fincher**.... **Moxie Pictures** has signed writer/director **Phillip Van** for global commercial representation. Van has helmed campaigns for a wide range of clients including **Blue Cross**, **Yves Saint Laurent**, **NBC**, **Optimum** and the **Tribeca Film Festival** that have earned him accolades at the **D&AD**, **One Show**, **Promax** and national **Addy** awards....



A scene from *Our Flag Means Death*

her husband as "complicated, hard-headed, really quite irritating at times—and now free. May he roam!"

Season two takes up that roaming with Berlucchi shooting three of its episodes. The cinematographer reflected on how the show has evolved visually, dating back to the pilot. Berlucchi recalled that initially you think of the traditional pirate movie genre, at times dark, kind of brooding, and dramatic. But all that wasn't in line with the spirit of the story. Berlucchi remembered Waititi had recently seen some stereotypical pirate project and came away from it declaring, "let's make the opposite of that." What sprung forth was a playful version of what could be done, working in concert with production designer **Ra Vincent** and costume designer **Christine Wada** to infuse

relationship dissolves a bit, the tone got darker at the end of season one—and that continued into season two. Setting that up in the initial episodes of the second season was cinematographer **Nathaniel Goodman**, followed by DP **Andy Rydzewski**, with the last three episodes of season two shot by Berlucchi. "It definitely started leaning into this world of pirates that you may know a little bit more," said Berlucchi, noting that shooting in New Zealand opened up the potential "for us to kind of make this so much more epic" as episodes in season two ventured outside considerably more than in the first season. Ships were on a stage in relatively close proximity to some of the most stunningly beautiful landscapes one could imagine, related Berlucchi.

As for his biggest takeaway from the ex-

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Shawn Levy

*Director/EP seeks to illuminate with **All the Light We Cannot See**, shares insights into the vision of the blind*



By Robert Goldrich

Last month at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) Tribute Awards gala, Shawn Levy received the inaugural Norman Jewison Career Achievement Award named in honor of the legendary Canadian filmmaker. The honor recognizes Canadians in the film industry who have made a global impact with their careers.

Levy's impact has spanned feature film and television as he's served in such roles as creator, director and producer—as well as the founder of 21 Laps Entertainment. He's extended his creative reach even further as demonstrated at the Toronto fest where the first two episodes of *All the Light We Cannot See* debuted. Levy exec produced the limited series, directing all of its episodes. Set to premiere on Netflix come November 2, *All the Light We Cannot See* is based on Anthony Doerr's Pulitzer Prize-winning book of the same title (adapted by writer Steven Knight) and follows the story of Marie-Laure (portrayed by newcomer Aria Mia Loberti), a blind French girl, and her father, Daniel LeBlanc (Mark Ruffalo), who flee German-occupied Paris with a legendary diamond to keep it from falling into the hands of the Nazis during World War II.

The series movingly explores the worlds of Marie-Laure and German soldier Werner (Louis Hoffman) whose paths cross in occupied France. We find that these two characters on opposite sides of the war have a unifying bond—radio broadcasts they listened to as youngsters featuring a professor who inspired them and provided a sort of sanctuary for their hearts and minds during tumultuous times.

As for what's next, Levy like the entire industry awaits what he hopes will be a fair and equitable settlement of the SAG-AFTRA strike. Then he will resume his directing duties on *Deadpool 3*, which was postponed halfway through production due to the strike. Levy also will look to find a way to direct a minimum of one episode for season 5 of *Stranger Things*, the groundbreaking series created by the Duffer brothers and for which Levy is an exec producer via 21 Laps.

Beyond all that, Levy is actively involved in varied projects, including the development of a *Star Wars* movie.

Levy's other directorial credits include the blockbuster *Night at the Museum* franchise, *Real Steel*, *The Internship*, *Date Night*, *This Is Where I Leave You* and *Free Guy*.

SHOOT: Please provide some backstory. What drew you to *All the Light We Cannot See*? How did you become involved?

Levy: I read the book long ago [at the end of 2014, the year it came out]. I raced into work in early January [after New Year's break] telling anyone who would listen that I was in love with this book and would do anything to turn it into a movie or a show. But the rights had long been snatched up by another producer—at Fox Searchlight.

Years later, there were rumblings that it was too daunting to compress 500-plus pages into two hours. We told then novelist, Anthony Doerr that we would do right by the source material. That we would look at an emerging format, the limited series, which wasn't bound by run time. He took the leap of faith with us.

In 2019 we get our hands on the rights. Along with Netflix we began the develop-

ment process, bringing in the brilliant writer Steven Knight [of *Peaky Blinders* fame, and a Best Original Screenplay Oscar nominee for *Dirty Pretty Things*]. His only condition was that he write all the episodes alone and personal. There was no writers' room. This was a real auteur adaptation by Steve.

SHOOT: Tell us about casting for the character of Marie-Laure—with Nell Sutton getting the role of her as a child, and Aria Mia Loberti as a young adult. I understand that you sought actors who were blind or had impaired vision.

Levy: Authenticity in casting would be creatively right and make it possibly better—by virtue of having a girl and a young woman who experienced the world in the same way that Marie-Laure experienced her world.

It's not like there are hundreds of such can-

didates [blind or low-vision actors] represented by talent agencies. We put out an open casting call on the internet. Hundreds of self-recorded submissions came back, running the gamut between aspiring actors and first-timers. Two of those first-timers were Nell and Aria.

Nell is vibrant, warm, funny and an instantly lovable little girl. I was smitten with Nell the first time I saw her.

Aria had never auditioned, much less acted before. I was struck by her fierce intelligence. She's an academic, a Fulbright scholar, a PhD candidate in rhetoric. The sharpness of her intellect and seriousness of her mind were instantly palpable—such important traits for Marie.

SHOOT: What's your biggest takeaway or lessons learned from your experience on *All the Light We Cannot See*?

Levy: The takeaways are different from any job I've ever done. They're not simply creative and professional. They are very much personal. It allowed me to understand and spend time with two girls who are legally blind and whose experience is utterly different than my own—and from anyone I've ever known. I developed a deeper understanding and an empathy for the experience of being blind. It changed

the way I directed. I normally use gestures and facial expressions for (to communicate with) my actors. When the usefulness of those tools are neutralized by the actors not seeing me, it forced me to be much more thoughtful about my words, to choose them in a concise and expressive way. The value in an economy of words, a note in a sentence or two rather than a paragraph of two. It affected and improved the way I do my job.

SHOOT: We feel the power of radio when Marie-Laure and Werner were youngsters—and then when Marie-Laure as a young adult is broadcasting secret messages to the Allies. Did that enter into your thinking about the use of sound?

Levy: The novelist told me this was a story about radio. It's a two-sided blade—with the power to inspire and inform on one hand, with noble outcomes. And on the other hand, the power to spread hate and propaganda. Joseph Goebbels said that the Nazi party would never have risen to power without the radio. This tool of technology conveys both information and disinformation. We wanted our show to have as rich a sonic soundscape as a visual landscape.



"I developed a deeper understanding and an empathy for the experience of being blind...It affected and improved the way I do my job."

street talk

Adobe and Havas have expanded their partnership, transforming the agency's end-to-end content workflows. The collaboration will enable all Havas agencies to leverage Adobe generative AI, and more efficiently deliver personalized customer experiences. Havas agencies will adopt Adobe GenStudio—Adobe's breakthrough enterprise content supply chain solution that brings together best-in-class applications across Adobe Creative Cloud, Express and Experience Cloud. The integration will enable agencies to accelerate the content process from ideation to delivery while also giving them direct access to Adobe Firefly, Adobe's family of creative generative AI models, so they can generate content that is designed to be safe for commercial use. Using Adobe GenStudio, Havas agencies will be able

to choose which content creation techniques and practices they employ, as well as how they prefer to leverage generative AI when activating new and variant content. They will also gain access to audience-specific data insights, enabling impact-based content optimization, and Adobe GenStudio's seamless collaboration features, which empower cross-functional teams to create, edit and deliver customer experiences in real time. On the heels of the recent launch of *Prose on Pixels*, Havas' global content at scale network, this collaboration reaffirms Havas' commitment to driving transformative change in the content production field.....Austin-based indie creative agency Bakery has appointed Alisa Sengel Wixom as its first-ever executive creative director. A seven-time Cannes Lions winner, she has held key roles at Dentsu, TBWA\Chiat\Day, Goodby Silverstein & Partners, Fallon, and BBH New York, working on award-winning campaigns for Budweiser, Levi's, Skittles and Jameson Whiskey. She will report directly to Bakery founder/chief creative officer Micky Ogando and turn out work for a roster of clients which includes Diageo, DeLorean Motors, Nike and Shiner.....

rep report

DP Denson Baker, ACS, NZSC has joined U.K.'s Loop Talent for representation. Hailing from New Zealand and of Maori heritage, Baker has a body of work spanning feature films, music videos, documentaries and commercials. His recent endeavors include feature film *The Colour Room* starring Phoebe Dynevor and Matthew Goode; the BBC TV series *The Luminaries* featuring Eve Hewson and Eva Green; and the SKY TV series *Domina* with Kasia Smutniak, Claire

Forlani and Isabella Rossellini. Baker's talent has also graced projects such as: *Ophelia* with Daisy Ridley and Naomi Watts; *Measure of a Man* with Donald Sutherland, Judy Greer and Luke Wilson; and the popular U.K. TV series *Victoria*. Honored with the 2021 Cinematographer of the Year Award by the Australian Cinematographers Society. Notable Loop Talent clients include production designer Declan Price (*A Bit of Light*, *Matriarch*), costume designer Cathy Prior (*Derry Girls*, *Sexy Beast*), Emmy Award-winning hair and make-up designer Frances Hounsom (*Magic Mike's Last Dance*, *The Rising*) and editor Galina Chakarova (*Rain Dogs*, *Grime Kids*). Recent Loop signings include hair and make-up designer Natalie Pateman whose most recent endeavors include the adaptation of *The Marlow Murder Club*...Costa Nikols has joined Riedel Communications, a designer, manufacturer and distributor of real-time video, audio, data, and communications networks, as VP of sales enablement for the global team. Nikols served as VP of global sales enablement at Grass Valley, where he helped guide the company through its transition from a hardware-based to a software-enabled brand. For over 20 years, Nikols held various leadership positions at Grass Valley and its acquisitions, including sr. product manager at Snell & Wilcox and sales engineering group manager at Miranda Technologies. For his role at Riedel, Nikols will be based in Montreal and report directly to Daniel Url, product division CCO.....



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