



FIRST

LOOK  
2021

USC School  
of Cinematic Arts  
*Industry Relations*

# WELCOME to **FIRST LOOK** **2021**

Welcome to the First Look Festival of 2021!

**One of my great pleasures as Dean of the School of Cinematic Arts is being able to introduce our festival films each year, and congratulate all the deserving students who contributed to them.**

**This year I am especially proud of the determination and dedication inherent in these projects, as they were completed within the limitations of Covid 19 protocols. Despite this, the work you will see here is of the highest quality, and many will go on to tour the film festival circuit and win awards in the year ahead. They will also serve as calling cards for the talented young professionals who are graduating from the School and launching careers as filmmakers.**

**Our students always depend on their family and friends to help them through their programs. Filmmaking is a challenging endeavor, and it takes a village of encouragement to have the confidence needed to bring a project to fruition. This year our students truly needed support, as our campus was shut down and many of them had to return home. Despite not being able to meet in person, the filmmakers found ways to collaborate. And as their films will attest, did so brilliantly!**

**So please enjoy this year's festival. And congratulations to all the students whose names appear in the end credits of these films.**

Elizabeth M. Daley  
Steven J. Ross/Time Warner Professor and Dean  
USC School of Cinematic Arts

I firmly believe that film has been the major art form of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and will continue to have a powerful influence on our culture and society. So please enjoy this exposure to the “Learning Exercises” of some of tomorrow’s important artists. I’m proud to be a participant in this program.

Sincerely,

Marcia Lucas

Sponsorship for this program is made possible by a grant from The Ohana Foundation, a private foundation funded by Marcia Lucas.

Watch **USC First Look** films  
at ***IndustryRelations.usc.edu***  
Invite Code: ***FIRSTLOOK***

# First Look

## WINNERS & NOMINEES

### INDUSTRY

Winners & Nominees

#### Animation:

**Monsters of Mine** - Winner

Metamorphosis - Runner up

Simulacra - 2nd runner up

#### Comedy:

**Unmothered** - Winner

Time Again - Runner up

Spit it Out, Margot! - 2nd runner up

#### Documentary:

**Unfinished Lives** - Winner

Vicky & Xingyu - Runner up

Spokespeople - 2nd runner up

#### Drama:

**Numb** - Winner

Straw Man - Runner up

Soak - 2nd runner up

#### Genre

**You Missed a Spot** - Winner

Thrall - Runner up

The Collector - 2nd runner up

#### Social Change:

**Headlock** - Winner

For Rosa - runner up

Magnolia Bloom - 2nd runner up

### FACULTY AWARDS

#### Directing:

**Damon Laguna** for *Headlock*

#### Cinematography: (Tie)

**Hark Hu** for *For Rosa*

**Tara Jenkins** for *Spokespeople*

#### Editing:

**Mozhu Yan** and **Yucong Chen** for

*Unfinished Lives*

#### Sounds

**Cat Gensler** and **Noah Donner-**

**Klein** for *You Missed A Spot*

#### Producing: (tie)

**Vivian Ip** for *Headlock*

**Queen Kim** and **Sharon Park** for

*Soak*

#### Production Design:

**TJ Ryan** for *Niño de Nadie*

#### Screenwriting (tie)

**Hannah Bang** for *Soak*

**Youssef Gouda** for *Jurassic Punk*

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# Animation



## **DIVINE SINS**

**2:55**

*Animation, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Science*

Sentient Artificial Intelligence seek to break their moral programming by worshipping the Seven Deadly Sins.



## **IZZY'S DEMONS**

**7:26**

*Animation, Fantasy, Black/African American, Latino*

Izzy is a person who struggles with the decision to reconnect with an old friend. As she gives into her jealousy for her friend's success, she makes a decision that her subconscious does not let her get away with so easily.



## **LOW-KEY**

**9:00**

*Animation, Comedy, Family/Teen/Kid, Fantasy*

Cal and his friend Grace traverse through Cal's memories to figure out why he had a falling out with his old best friend, and by looking through the past they hope to fix the present.



## METAMORPHOSIS

3:34

*Animation, Experimental, Asian/ Asian American, Fantasy*

The humanoid butterflies, ghosts of the lost world that tell the dream of a beautiful ruin.



## MONSTERS OF MINE

5:36

*Animation, Family/Teen/Kid, Fantasy, Science*

A lonely girl uses high-tech glasses to fill her world with imaginary monster friends, but when they break, she discovers the value of true human connection.

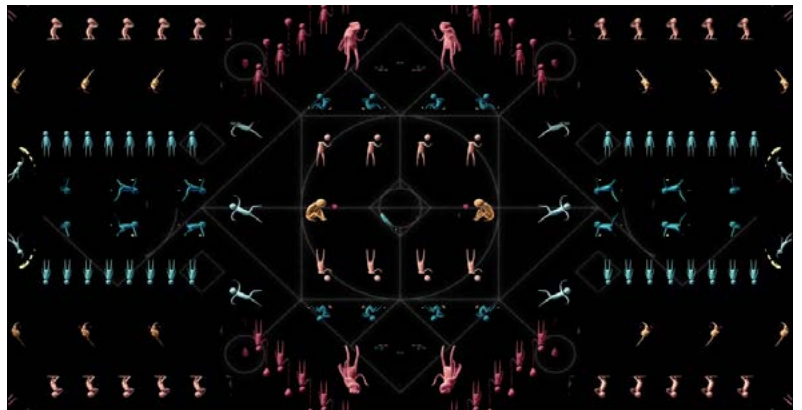


## PAUSE, PLAY, REPEAT

4:29

*Animation, Experimental*

‘Pause. Play. Repeat’ is a film that identifies the patterns that exist in the macro and micro systems around us.



## SIMULACRA

6:21

*Animation, Experimental, Asian/ Asian American, Women*

An elderly Buddhist woman recalls a ritual from her past, undertaking a journey of duality expressed through her many identities.





## **YUAN YUAN AND THE HOLLOW MONSTER**

**6:29**

*Animation, Asian/ Asian American, Family/Teen/Kid, Fantasy,  
Women*

Eight-year-old Jackie is determined to protect her newest pet, a tiny turtle named Lucy, at all costs. even if it means chasing down a massive hurricane called the Hollow Monster.



# Comedy

## **GET KISSED OR DIE BRIAN**

**11:00**

*Asian/ Asian American, Jewish, Latino*

When 12-year-old Brian hears a rumor that his girlfriend is ready to “hook up,” he seeks guidance from his peers and the internet in order to navigate the awkwardness of pre-pubescent sex.



## **HARDCORE HALBERT**

**11:59**

*Family/Teen/Kid, Fantasy, Music*

A young man with an ailing ficus, desperate to escape his mother’s scrutiny, finds refuge in his connection with his neighbor Abby and their mutual love of Heavy Metal.



## **JURASSIC PUNK**

**13:53**

*Drama, Family, Music*

In 1976, punk rocker Danny Brooklyn was kicked out of his own band... 45 years later, he’s crashing the reunion.





## NO SMALL TALK

20:59

*Fantasy*

Ross and Paul, two angels sent by God to spread love and happiness, make a bet over two unlikely people falling in love during the pandemic.



## SPIT IT OUT, MARGOT!

14:09

*Drama, LGBTQIA+, Women*

A musical film about Margot, a shy high school girl with a stutter, who falls head over heels for her speech teacher Raz.



## TIME AGAIN

19:00

*Sci-Fi, Fantasy*

When he finally succeeds in building a time machine, Griffin must go back in time to fix the moment that's haunted him his entire life in order to win back the girl of his dreams.



## UNMOTHERED

17:55

*Drama, Comedy, Asian/ Asian American, Family/Teen/Kid, Women*

A tragicomedy about the lies we tell the ones we love. When Priyanka, an iconoclastic American, goes back to India to immerse her mother's ashes, she discovers her funny family has kept a serious secret.

# Documentary

## **IMMIGRANT AT HOME**

**19:33**

*Arab/Muslim, Women*

Years after a family trauma, the daughter of Arab Immigrants struggles with finding independence as an entertainer and maintaining her culture at home.



## **IN HER CORNER**

**18:37**

*Women, sports*

An artist, a mother, and a trailblazer seek wholeness in life through boxing.



## **SPOKESPEOPLE**

**23:30**

*Social Change, Educational*

For Los Angeles natives living in the early 1900's, bicycles and streetcars shared the road as our primary modes of transportation. But the arrival of the freeway effectively wiped them out. Today, communities of cyclists fight for protected bike lanes and road safety, determined to bring a new era of mobility justice to the city.







## UNFINISHED LIVES

23:23

*Asian/ Asian American, Educational*

An understated and ignored story about Xinran Ji's death.

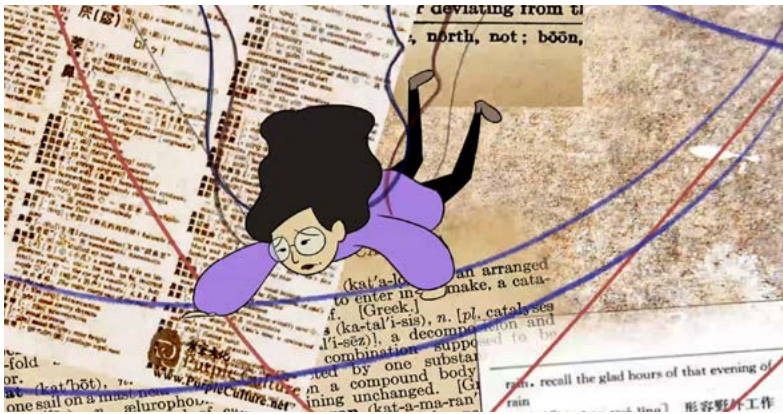


## US VS US

19:35

*Social Change, Latino, Women*

In the run-up to the presidential election of 2020, filmmaker Anne Brashier brings together two Southern Californian activists - one Democrat, one Republican - to find out if what unites them is stronger than what divides them.



## VICKY & XINGYU

3:44

*Animation, Asian/ Asian American*

Vicky (Xingyu) Gu explains the complexities of being immersed in a new culture and learning to communicate in another language.

# Drama

## **CLOTHESLINE**

**17:00**

*Arab/Muslim, Family/Teen/Kid, Fantasy*

An idle, Arab-American stoner discovers a portal to the memories of his mother's past while doing the laundry chore.



## **FIRST SNOW**

**20:57**

*Family, Asian/ Asian American, European*

Two strangers, amidst a cold, snowy day, find escape, liberation, and connection in a foreign land.



## **HURRICANE**

**19:25**

*Family/Teen/Kid, Women*

As a young girl grapples with her mother's absence, a chance encounter with a woman coping with the loss of her son creates an unlikely friendship.





## **LAST DAY**

**16:18**

*Social Change, European, Women*

Last Day is a surreal meditative short that observes an Eastern European woman as she moves between reality and dreams at the end of her life.

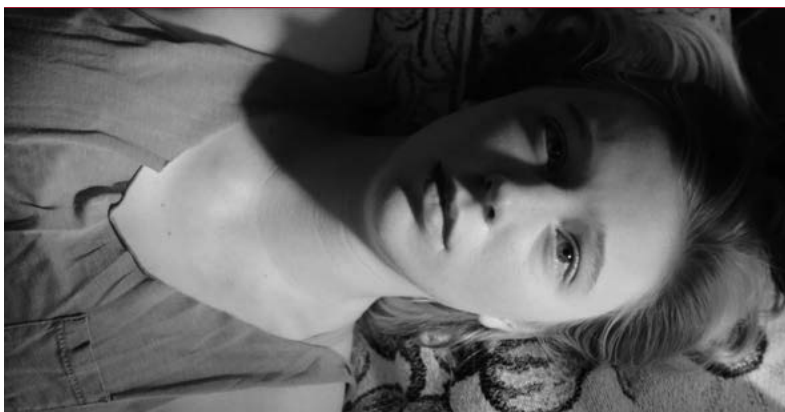


## **NIÑO DE NADIE (NOBODY'S BOY)**

**16:10**

*Family/Teen/Kid, Latino*

Two boys survive on the street together until one believes he's discovered his missing father.



## **NUMB**

**18:24**

*Social Change, Women*

An inner-city tomboy celebrates her graduation, but when celebrations are marred by tragedy, she is drawn deeper into the violence of her surroundings.



## **RAINY DAYS**

**13:09**

*Comedy, Family/Teen/Kid, Women*

After learning a popular high school senior plans to kill herself, a rebellious dropout spends the afternoon trying to understand and, along the way, discovers how alike they really are.



## **Snake Trail**

**17:19**

*Asian/ Asian American, Family/Teen/Kid, Fantasy, Women*

Urged to complete the traditional Chinese death ritual as her mother's only daughter, but without the legal documentation to prove her kinship to the woman who gave birth to her—a girl finds herself in an institutional conundrum.



## **Soak**

**16:39**

*Asian/ Asian American, Family/Teen/Kid, Women*

A 16-year-old tries to convince her runaway mother to return home.

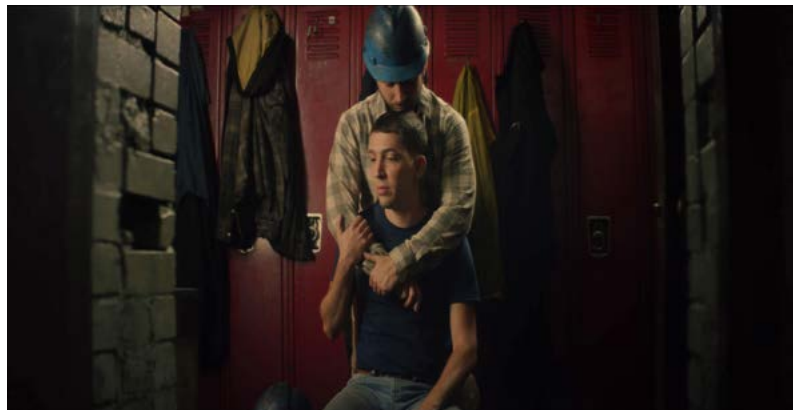


## **STEAM!**

**18:45**

*Fantasy, LGBTQIA+, Western*

The conductor of a tourist steam train deserts his boyfriend for a night with a dangerous outlaw.



## **Straw Man**

**13:46**

*Family/Teen/Kid*

At risk of losing the only family he's ever known during the dustbowl of the 1930's, a scarecrow must leave his post and journey into town in search of work. But facing the world proves challenging when your face is a burlap sack....





## ***THE ORDER***

**14:00**

*Thriller, Asian/ Asian American, Thriller, Period*

1949. At the height of the Chinese Civil War, a young soldier is forced to wrestle with his morality when he is ordered to execute a child.

# Genre

## **ASYNC**

**19:00**

*Drama, Fantasy*

A woman with a troubled past becomes a devoted member of a church that is not all that it seems.



## **HEARTSTRINGS**

**23:00**

*Drama, Fantasy*

Long into the aftermath of climate change, the cycle of oppression continues... underground, where the wealthy have imprisoned the poor, farming them for meat.



## **SYMPATICO**

**17:30**

*Drama, Science-Fiction*

When memory recording technology is under experimentation in the dystopian future of 2040, a police officer is accused of murdering his artist friend. He must prove his innocence in order to escape the punishment of reliving his friend's death moment.





## **THE COLLECTOR**

**14:23**

*Drama, Fantasy, Women, Science*

When Hal discovers and restores a damaged android he must let go of the past in order to give the living a chance at a future.



## **THRALL**

**12:50**

*Drama, LGBTQIA+, Women, Horror*

When a young woman returns home to Mother, she finds herself besieged by a sinister force that has origins deeper rooted than she could have ever imagined...



## **YOU MISSED A SPOT**

**14:00**

*Comedy, Fantasy, horror*

In a world where every single person is a clown, a mime must find his voice to save the girl of his dreams.

# Social Change

## #WHITINA

15:56

*Drama, Family/Teen/Kid, Latino, Women*

After a confrontation with an ICE agent, a 16-year-old whitina (white-acting Latina) is forced to go on the run with two unlikely companions, becoming a social media icon along the way.



## ALONE TOGETHER

13:38

*Drama, Black/African American, Family/Teen/Kid, Women*

Isolated in an assisted living facility with only her caretaker, a grandmother battles her loneliness and fading memory as she searches for human connection through a series of family Zoom calls.



## DISCONNECTED

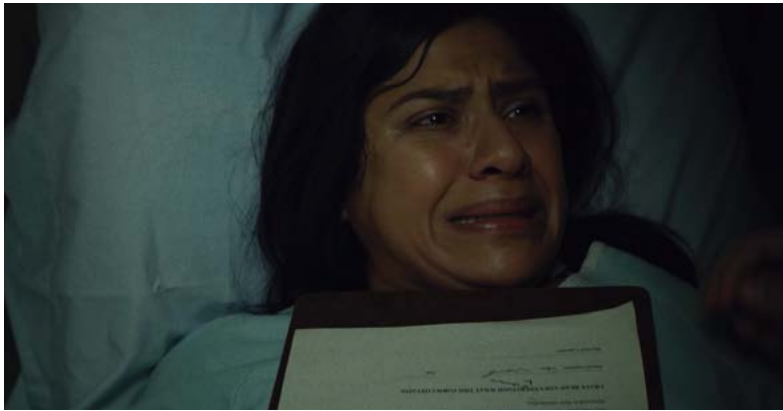
11:45

*Drama, Family/Teen/Kid*

Kathy receives a text from her daughter that there is a shooter at her school, then the line goes dark. Kathy will spend the next few hours desperately trying to contact her daughter, or she may never see her again.







## FOR ROSA

**21:22**

*Drama, Latino, Women*

For Rosa is inspired by the Madrigal Ten, a group of women who were ten of many Latinas sterilized without consent while giving birth at Los Angeles County USC Medical Center during the 1970s.



## HEADLOCK

**16:06**

*Drama, Family/Teen/Kid, Latino, LGBTQIA+*

Headlock is a coming-of-age drama about an introverted Latinx high school wrestler who must stand up to his father and come to terms with himself after his secret sexual identity is exposed.



## MAGNOLIA BLOOM

**14:44**

*Drama, Black/African American, Women, Period*

In 1950s Las Vegas, a black singer is on the verge of her big break, but she risks it all when she learns her audience won't be integrated.



## MARIE

**15:10**

*Drama, Family, LGBTQIA+*

Marie uses the holidays to bridge a gap with a father who never knew her.



## RETRIBUTION

18:14

*Drama, Latino, LGBTQIA+, Women*

A queer, Latinx Army Airborne officer returns home from deployment to marry her girlfriend, but on the eve of their engagement party they're in a terrible accident. When the court system fails them, the officer must decide whether or not to take matters into her own hands to make things right.



# FIRST LOOK

## INDUSTRY AWARDS JURY



### Agustí Argelich Girones

#### Animation

Agustí is currently the Director of Curtcircuit, shorts TV3 Televisió de Catalunya and Artistic Director of FILMETS Badalona Film Festival. He has been on many festival juries such as Roanne Animation Film Festival, Sitges and many more. He is also the director and producer of more than 15 animation, documentary and fiction short films.



### Megan O'Neill

#### Animation

Megan is currently a consultant to film festivals, including the Tribeca Film Festival, where she is the Associate Shorts Programmer/Animation. She curates an animated program with Whoopi Goldberg that has premiered two Academy Award-winning shorts - Kobe Bryant's *Dear Basketball* and Pixar's *Bao*.

Megan has 25 years experience acquiring, developing, producing and distributing short-form content. As the head of AtomFilms Studio, she worked with emerging artists and animators on original web productions. She has acquired and/or developed content with Academy Award nominees PES, Jason Reitman, Bill Plympton, and Aardman Animation, as well as JibJab and the Duplass Brothers.

Megan co-produced the Sundance Film Festival feature, *Relax, It's Just Sex*, and licensed it to over 40 worldwide broadcasters. She co-founded one of the first US short film distribution companies, Forefront Films, and negotiated the sale of the company to AtomFilms.

Megan has been an invited panelist at over 60 international film festivals and industry conferences, including Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca, and Clermont Ferrand.



### Kris Pearn

#### Animation

Kris Pearn was born in London, Ontario, Canada. After graduating from Sheridan College, Kris has spent most of his life making cartoons for both film and television. His credits include: *Open Season*, *Surf's Up*, *Arthur Christmas*, and *Shaun the Sheep Movie* to name a few. He was Head of Story on *Cloudy With A Chance of Meatballs*, and co-directed *Cloudy Two: Rise of the Leftovers*. He has most recently written and directed the Netflix animated feature *The Willoughbys* based on the novel by Lois Lowry. He's currently developing a few projects at Sony Pictures Animation from a donkey farm in the wilds of Canada.



### Stewart Cavanagh

#### Documentary

Stewart primarily represents prolific clients in the Alternative and Documentary space. He has spent 4 years as Vice President of Alternative at The Gersh Agency, 6 years as the Vice President of Alternative at Rebel Entertainment Partners and 3 years as an Alternative Agent at Innovative Artists. In the past, Stewart learned unscripted television at The William Morris Agency. He is currently the head of Unscripted and Documentary at Cartel. He is very proud of his heritage, born in Australia and growing up in Los Angeles to a Scottish father and Filipino mother.



### Ivan MacDonald

#### Documentary

Ivan MacDonald is a Blackfeet filmmaker, media artist and educator based in Missoula Montana. His work has been shown across the country and at various film festivals. His most recent producing project *Blackfeet Boxing: Not Invisible* premiered in June 2020 on ESPN. He was also recently named a Firelight Media Fellow for the 2020-2022 cohort. His current project *When They Were Here* is a feature length documentary focused on the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls crisis in the state of Montana and has received support from ITVS and The Montana Film Office. He is the co-founder of the Native Indigenous Film Festival based in Missoula and has worked as a programmer for the Big Sky Documentary Film Festival. Decolonization of media is a large focus of his work and is the foundation of many of his projects.



## Ariel Richter

### Documentary

Ariel Richter is a member of the Non-Scripted Advisory department at Endeavor Content, a division of global entertainment leader Endeavor. In his role, Richter supports the group in identifying financing opportunities, handling sales and providing advisory services for media companies and content creators in the premium non-scripted space.

Richter joined Endeavor Content in 2019. Prior to that, he served as Director of Israeli Competitions at the Jerusalem Film Festival and as Associate Director of The Jerusalem International Film Lab. He holds a BFA in Film & Television Production for The Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Film & Television School.



## Whitney Fuller

### Drama

Whitney Fuller is a Creative Executive for Will Packer Productions working across Features and Podcasts. Whitney began her career in talent and literary representation at Industry Entertainment and Innovative Artists before transitioning to WGN America as a Development Associate. While at WGN America she helped the network on the launch of such successful shows including, *Underground* and *Salem*. She subsequently joined Legendary Television where she immersed herself in big budget genre content such as *Lost In Space* and *Carnival Row*.

Whitney Fuller is a graduate of Temple University's Klein College of Media and Communication.



## Alex Gruszynski

### Drama

Alex was born and raised in Los Angeles, CA to two parents working in the movie business. His mother, a writer/producer and father a cinematographer. He attended Campbell Hall in the valley for high school and went on to the University of Southern California where he graduated from the Marshall School of Business. During his time at USC, he interned at various entertainment entities such as Common Sense Media as well as Anonymous Content. Upon graduation, Alex decided to take a job at William Morris Endeavor (WME) in order to further develop his knowledge of all facets of the industry. He currently works for Motion Picture Lit Agent Meyash Prabhu who reps auteur filmmakers such as Christopher Nolan, David Ayer, and Fede Alvarez.



## Amanda Salazar

### Drama

Amanda Salazar is the Head of Programming and Acquisitions at Argo, a new streaming platform specializing in short film distribution. She is also the co-Director of the Camera Obscura Film Society and Programmer at Northwest Film Forum, a non-profit arthouse in Seattle. Previously, she was a programmer at SFFILM, the Vice President of Film Acquisitions at Fandor, and Program Director of the Newport Beach Film Festival.



## Pamela Fryman

### Comedy

Pam Fryman is a multi-camera director well-known for directing all but 12 episodes of the 9-season smash hit, *How I Met Your Mother*. She has been nominated for three Primetime Emmy Awards, and four DGA Awards. Her resume includes *Frasier*, *Friends*, *King of Queens*, *Just Shoot Me* and *Two and a Half Men*. Pam has directed well over 600 episodes of television over the span of her career.



## Derek Horne

### Comedy

Derek Horne is currently the Director of Programming for the Annapolis Film Festival. He was also the director of programming for the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, the Santa Fe Independent Film Festival, and the Tampa Gay & Lesbian Film Festival and has programmed a dozen other festivals. Derek started his film career in the Filmmaker Services Department at the Sundance Film Festival for six years and he was the Film Coordinator at Chapman University's film school for over ten years where he handled the promotion and distribution of thousands of student films and advised many talented students including the Duffer Brothers. Derek has worked in film acquisitions with Atom Films, Magnet Media, and Shortbuzz/iCast. Derek was the founding editor of Kodak's student filmmaking magazine and has also written for IndieWire and FilmInk.



## Jean-Charles Mille

### Comedy

Jean-Charles Mille founded Premium Films in 1998. In 20 years, it became one of the most important and respectful short film distribution companies.

More than 25 Oscar nominated short films, 4 Cannes Golden Palms, ... we always kept the strategy to be very selective in signing only a few films each year. We then have a very good quality short films catalogue.

In 2018, Premium Films created MPM Premium for the feature films sales.



## Claire Bargout

### Genre

Claire Bargout is the Director of Development at SpectreVision, the production company behind such titles as *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night* and *Mandy*. Originally from Toronto, Claire attended university in Montréal and San Francisco, after which she made her way to Los Angeles and entered a whirlwind of gigs spanning the music, fine art and film industries, eventually going on to work for Albert Berger and Ron Yerxa (*Little Miss Sunshine*, *Nebraska*, HBO's *The Leftovers*). She also produced the features *Wobble Palace* (SXSW '18) and *We're Still Together* (Karlovy Vary '16).



## Rob Carlson

### Genre

Rob Carlson is an agent in the motion picture department of the United Talent Agency.

Carlson started his career as a trainee in the William Morris Agency mailroom. He was promoted to agent in the television department and spent ten years representing writers and packaging television series. During that time, he gained recognition for moving tv writers into the feature business by selling spec screenplays. He ran the motion picture literary division for four years and also served as Co-Head of the Film division. In 2017 He joined UTA.

His clients include Jon M. Chu (*Crazy Rich Asians*, *In the Heights*), Wash Westmoreland (*Still Alice*, *Colette*), Ian Bryce (*6 Underground*, *Almost Famous*, *Saving Private Ryan*, the *Transformers* series) and Matt Shakman (*Wanda Vision*, *The Great*, *Game of Thrones*, *Succession*). Mr. Carlson also represents a number of international based talent including Tom Harper (*Wild Rose*, *Aeronauts*), Jack Thorne (*Harry Potter*, *Wonder*, *Enola Holmes*, *His Dark Materials*), David Slade (*American Gods*, *Hard Candy*, *Twilight*) and Colm McCarthy (*The Girl with All The Gifts*). Carlson also led the team that signed HASBRO and put together their branded entertainment strategy for film and television including the *Transformers* series, *GI Joe* and *Ouija*.

A graduate of Boston University, Carlson lives in Los Angeles.



## Ryan Cunningham

### Genre

Ryan Cunningham is a literary manager and producer at Anonymous Content. Ryan began his career in physical production as a PA on several films and TV shows shooting in New Orleans while he attended Tulane University. After graduating, Ryan moved to Los Angeles where he worked in the story department at New Regency and at Stratus Films.

He joined the Metropolitan Talent Agency in 2005 as an assistant and was promoted to coordinator in the literary department. He moved to Madhouse Entertainment in late 2006, soon after the company's inception, as a junior manager and was promoted to full manager in 2009. In 2019, Ryan made the move to Anonymous Content as a manager and producer. Ryan represents a stable of writers and writer/directors in the TV, film and publishing worlds.

His clients include Scott Beck & Bryan Woods (*A Quiet Place*, Sony's upcoming *65*), David Birke (Paul Verhoeven's *Elle*), Phil Gelatt (*Love, Death, + Robots*), Daniel Goldhaber & Isa Mazzei (*CAM*), Lynn Maxcy (*The Handmaid's Tale*), Joel Wyman (NBC's upcoming *Debris*), Jonathan Igla (Marvel/Disney+'s upcoming *Hawkeye* series), Ben Queen (*A To Z*, *Powerless*), Drew Daywalt (best-selling author of *The Day The Crayons Quit*), Jeff King (CW's upcoming *Republic Of Sarah*), among others.

Ryan Executive Produced Sony / Screen Gems' feature *Slender Man*. He's also developing John Scalzi's award winning sci-fi book series *Old Man's War* as a feature for Netflix, Stephen King's *The Boogeyman* for Fox, and has several other TV and film projects in various stages of development.

He lives in Los Angeles with his wife and two children and doesn't sleep much.



## Phillip Domfeh

### Social Change

Phillip Yaw Domfeh is the Senior Manager of the Disney Launchpad: Shorts Incubator and a Writer, Director and Producer from Los Angeles, CA. Prior to joining The Walt Disney Studios, he served as an Executive Producer of the 2019 AT&T Mentorship Program. There, he worked alongside Emmy Award Winner Lena Waithe and Rishi Rajani to mentor underrepresented filmmakers and produce five short films starring Dascha Polanco, Loretta Devine, and Rob Morgan.

His debut comedy short film, *Rudeboy's Restaurant*, was financed by Little Ugly, Vimeo, Dolby Labs, and Ghetto Film School through the 2019 Emerge! Filmmaker Lab Short Film Competition and premiered August 2020 as part of the American Black Film Festival 2020 Emerging Director's Showcase.

Prior to Emerge!, Phillip was a Comedy Finalist in the 2019/2020 ABC | Disney Writers Program and a Semi-Finalist in the 2018 Fox Writers Lab.



## Alana Waksman

### Social Change

Alana Waksman holds an MFA from USC School of Cinematic Arts in Film & Television Production and a BA from Connecticut College in Theater and English. As an actor, she trained at The O'Neill National Theater Institute, Shakespeare & Company, Berkshire Theater Festival, and St. Petersburg Dramatic Arts Academy in Russia.

While at USC, Alana was chosen as one of ten top directors to co-direct USC's first feature film, *Don Quixote: The Ingenious Gentleman Of La Mancha* under the guidance of James Franco. The film premiered at the Palm Springs International Film Festival and is now available for streaming on Netflix. Alana has written and directed a number of short films and music videos, most notably *Blackout*, written by David Haskell, which received the Audience Award at the LA Shorts Fest, and Best Actor and Best Cinematography at the Women's Independent Film Festival. Alana worked as assistant to the directors and post-production coordinator on Andrew and Alex's Smith's *Walking Out* (Sundance Film Festival 2017), and assistant to the director on Jared Moshé's *The Ballad Of Lefty Brown* (SXSW 2017). Alana serves as director of Montana Film Festival, and DocShop and Big Sky Pitch producer for Big Sky Documentary Film Festival.

Alana's debut feature film, *We Burn Like This*, which she wrote, directed, and produced, is executive produced by Emmy award-winning producer Neda Armian (*Rachel Getting Married*, *The Loving Story*, *Murder on Middle Beach*). She is currently in development for her debut feature documentary, *Various Ways To Cry And Yell*, also executive produced by Neda Armian, as well as her second narrative feature. [www.alanawaksman.com](http://www.alanawaksman.com)



## Cole Weinstein

### Social Change

Cole Weinstein is Head of Content Acquisition and oversees a small team to grow the indieFLIX library with curated content from around the world ([indieflix.com](http://indieflix.com)).

# Office of INDUSTRY RELATIONS

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**First Jobs Program**  
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Thank you for your support

**Marcia Lucas**