FIRST LOOK 2023

DRAMA
SOCIAL CHANGE
COMEDY
DOCUMENTARY
ANIMATION
GENRE
We are pleased to once again be celebrating talented School of Cinematic Arts filmmakers, and shine a spotlight on their film projects. This year’s First Look films are as compelling and entertaining as always, and I know you will enjoy seeing them! Thank you for being here to support our filmmakers.

This showcase marks both an ending, and a beginning. These films may be complete, but they are about to embark on a life beyond SCA. They will screen at film festivals and win awards. They will be calling cards for the students who are graduating this year. And they will be appreciated and claimed as favorites by viewers who could be anywhere in the world.

I’d also like to acknowledge the many months of hard work and determination that went into making these projects. Filmmaking is frequently about problem solving. However, it is foremost a collaborative, community-building endeavor. These films are symbols of relationships forged at our School, many of which will continue into the professional world.

This year, First Look is also debuting a pitch competition. Congratulations to the four students who will have the opportunity to get feedback on their next big ideas from industry executives! And a big congratulations to all the filmmakers whose names appear in the end credits of this year’s First Look 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 20th 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.
SO MUCH MORE TO OFFER
CTAN 470 Documentary Animation Production
4:47

Lyndzi uses her own experience of being treated unfairly as a plus-sized person to raise people’s attention toward body positivity.

WHAT THEY LEFT BEHIND
CTAN 594 Animation Thesis
7:00

Several years after her grandfathers had passed away, a young woman recollects her memories of them.

JOSS LOTUSES TO GRANDMA
CTAN 594 Animation Thesis
6:15

A girl remembers her childhood relationship with her grandma in Malaysia before it was fractured by her immigration to NYC.
COMEDY

WORK LIFE
CTPR 546 Advanced Production Graduate
13:00

Four corporate co-workers unknowingly cross paths during a chaotic weekend that leaves their lives intertwined through improbable twists of fate.

VIRGINS FOR SATAN
CTPR 480 Advanced Production Undergraduate
13:56

Desperate to lose her virginity, a sheltered Christian teen makes a deal with the devil to get laid.

THE FAIRCHILD
CTPR 581 Advanced Thesis
14:00

The new membership desk assistant at an exclusive museum unwillingly becomes a special exhibit when staff and visitors obsess over him and his hair instead of the art on the walls.

BLACKIFIER
CTPR 546 Advanced Production Graduate
15:00

After watching an odd TV infomercial advertising a magical spray called BLACKIFIER, which can make anyone appear to be black to everyone around them, Karen goes on a journey inside an alternate TV universe to see how exciting the black experience is.
**NIGHT MORNING**  
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis  
16:29

While everyone else is sleeping, two friends are transported to a world of their own.

**BAD TOGETHER**  
CTPR 480 Advanced Production Undergraduate  
13:59

A self-serving high schooler learns the complicated nature of friendship when she is forced to either team up with her arch-enemy or risk losing her best friend to the most popular guy in school.

**GO DANI GO**  
CTPR 546 Advanced Production Graduate  
10:46

A spunky, young athlete must choose between fulfilling her duty to her farm-working family or chasing her dream of playing soccer.

**AMBULANCE CHASERS**  
CTPR 484 Advanced Multi-Camera Television  
29:58

Legal TV shows are always about the big, important cases, the fancy law firms, and the top attorneys; Ambulance Chasers is a half-hour, multi-camera comedy about what happens to the bottom 50% of the law school graduating class.
STAY
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
15:09

A veteran suffering from PTSD faces a triggering decision, forcing him to reconcile with a past of pain, loss, and disconnection.

AFTER SUNSET, DAWN ARRIVES
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
15:00

In early 2000’s Los Angeles, introverted and unsociable 65 year-old Wan falls in love with a man who is nearly 30 years his junior and struggles to embrace his homosexuality, which he had suppressed his entire life, while also confronting his guilt towards his deceased wife.

WHAT LIES WITHIN
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
16:20

A young man with an intimacy complex returns home to live with his grandmother who raised him—only to find their strange past resurface once more.

INSTANT NOODLE
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
13:38

Marianna goes on a grocery run to buy instant noodle, a dish her recently deceased Indonesian Mom often prepares for birthdays, and unexpectedly encounters a series of unfortunate events which forces her to embrace her Asian heritage and grieve her mother’s death.
THE CODE OF FAMILY
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
14:00

After the death of her husband, a 63-year-old Asian grandma decides to learn computer science to fulfill his last wish, but almost jeopardizes the relationship with the rest of her family as she tries to keep it a secret.

SITTING THE MONTH
CMPP 592 Stark Special
18:20

A new mother struggles with the Chinese postpartum tradition of "sitting the month" in the wake of her own mother's passing.

CHEOL (철)
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
17:00

A Korean son returns to his estranged father’s home bearing news that he’ll be conscripting the way he thinks his father would’ve wanted – only for him to discover his father’s objection and late stage leukemia.

EBEZINA
CTPR 546 Advanced Production Graduate
13:00

Through spiritual encounters with a mystery man, a young boy learns a song in hopes to reconnect with his grieving father.

PROVENANCE
CTPR 486 Single Camera Television Dramatic Series
30:00

Art specialists at a high-end auction house compete in the cutthroat world of contemporary art sales.
When a dancer wins an audition to an elite conservatory, she must balance caring for her dying mother and her own growing pill addiction in order to change her life.
DANCEABLE
CTPR 547 Advanced Documentary Production Graduate
22:33

Three dancers with disabilities seek freedom through movement.

ECHOES OF KEF TIME
CTPR 547 Advanced Documentary Production Graduate
26:30

The last family in a long line of Armenian-American musicians must find a way to keep their tradition alive.

DOWN THE ROAD
CTPR 547 Advanced Documentary Production Graduate
21:04

A single father and his six-year-old daughter embark on a life-altering journey to provide homes to survivors of California’s deadliest wildfires.

I AM MORE DANGEROUS DEAD
CTPR 547 Advanced Documentary Production Graduate
24:00

A poetic tribute to Nigerian activist and writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was executed after exposing the exploitation of his native land by his government and Big Oil.
AVALANCHES
CTPR 546 Advanced Production Graduate
14:00

When his younger brother joins the team, a high school lacrosse player is forced to confront his coach’s sexual abuse, despite the institutional pressures stacked against him.

DIVINE INTERVENTION
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
9:11

During Earth’s Performance Evaluation, Quiesha, an Earthling, is teleported to the divine world, where she learns a human-saving lesson.

BACKLOG
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
15:50

The true story of a young collegiate woman who tried to find justice for three years for her shelved rape kit—only to become the key witness in the Senate hearing to end the rape kit backlog. Can she trust the system that betrayed her?

VUELVE
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
19:50

After her best friend inadvertently exposes her secret at a party, Lucy finds herself having to face her father and overbearing grandmother to get the understanding that she desperately needs from her family.
THE MEASURE OF A MAN
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
15:00
A young man who is a victim of rape and sexual assault finds a healing space through his estranged father.

NEW IN TOWN
CTPR 565 Making Media for Social Change
14:30
After becoming houseless, Laura, a failed corporate woman, struggles to fit into a new environment, a houseless tent town in Los Angeles. She actively tries to separate herself from other unhoused, but she slowly understands that she is becoming part of the tent town and starts to open up to the people around her.
SOMNIPHOBIA
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
14:05

A young, ambitious woman tries to break into the workplace while suffering from sleep paralysis episodes where she is terrorized by an otherworldly creature.

THE SPIRIT BECAME FLESH
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
16:33

An unbeliever returns to his deeply religious hometown only to find that it has fallen prey to a sinister monster that disguises itself as the Holy Spirit of God.

HEATHER’S VOICE
801 SLOAN
17:00

Tasked with promoting a tech company’s VR innovations, a young scientist risks her job when she decides to use her creations to faithfully serve a grief-stricken family - rather than follow the company’s wish to stage a publicity stunt.

ODD/EVEN
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
13:00

A young female escapes a toxic relationship.
LOVELY
CTPR 565 Making Media for Social Change
15:53

When Ria, a 16-year-old Indian-American girl, sneaks into her family’s grocery store basement to use skin-lightening creams to impress her mother, she encounters a mysterious woman who promises her fairer and whiter skin for life.

AMERICAN GIRL
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
17:00

A Mexican laundromat worker receives the golden ticket to her favorite television show where she must dethrone her TV idol to survive a sinister talent show, win the cash prize, and save her family business from eviction.

AGUA DE TU MADRE
CTPR 581 Narrative Thesis
11:49

In 1958, at the brink of the Cuban Revolution, an AfroCuban mother makes a pact of protection with the Santeria sea goddess, Yemayá, to ensure her son’s safe travel as a refugee to the United States. 50 years later, her pregnant granddaughter struggles to secure financial freedom in a modern-day Miami where old racial tensions run high – all while discovering the repercussions of her grandmother’s actions which threaten to tear her family apart.
HE LOVES ME NOT
CTPR 480 Advanced Production
Undergraduate
10:20

After befriending the man imprisoned in her basement, eight year-old Ada loves listening to the fantastical stories he tells. One day, a story starts to blur the lines of fantasy and reality, unraveling her family's darkest year.

CABBAGE
CTPR 480 Advanced Production
Undergraduate
14:02

On a desolate farm, a couple's prayers are answered after a visitor offers them a sinister deal. Blinded by their joy, they struggle to realize that what they once desired may lead to their own unraveling.

SERAPHIM
CTPR 546 Advanced Production
Graduate
13:50

After her sister is chosen as a modern-day prophet by a seraph living in her family’s home, a girl begins to consider the ramifications of being a devoted agent of God.
SUHAIL KAFITY  
Associate Professor of the Practice of Cinematic Arts

Suhail F Kafity M.P.S.E is an Associate Professor of Practice of Cinematic Arts School of Cinematic Arts University of Southern California. Suhail has over thirty years of experience in theatrical feature and television post-production sound and has over fifty feature films credits.

PRODUCTION DESIGN

MICHAEL PROVART  
Associate Professor of the Practice of Cinematic Arts

A lover of film and influenced by film in his visual work, Michael pursued a Master of Fine Arts Degree with a specialization in Production Design from the American Film Institute. He designed and art directed many features, commercials and music videos. He became a member of the Art Directors Guild in 2000.

EDITING

JASON ROSENFIELD  
Adjunct Associate Professor

A winner of three Emmy Awards, Jason Rosenfield’s resume as film editor, director, producer, writer, and creative consultant includes an Oscar nomination, a Peabody, DGA and R.F. Kennedy Awards, and collaborations with directors ranging from Hollywood legend Robert Altman to three-time Oscar-winning documentarian Mark Jonathan Harris.

CINEMATOGRAPHY

ANTHONY KUHNZ  
Adjunct Professor

Having shot over 200 projects, including ten feature films, Anthony enjoys challenging himself to continually experiment and evolve, using cinematography to effectively enhance story, theme and character in the magical way only it can.

PRODUCING

SCOTT KROOPF  
Professor of Cinematic Arts

Scott Kroopf has produced; executive produced and supervised more than 70 productions over the course of his career. He has run two film production companies that produced and financed films and has over 30 years of experience in the entertainment business.

SCREENWRITING

DAVID WEBER  
Associate Professor of the Practice of Cinematic Arts

David Weber is a screenwriter, TV writer, international teacher and script consultant, as well as a writer of non-fiction books. Weber is currently at work on a rewrite of the feature screenplay Found, for Brio Films, Luc Bossi and Christophe Mazodier producers.

DIRECTING

STEVEN D. ALBREZZI  
Associate Professor of Practice

Mr. Albrezzi’s work has been recognized with several national and international awards. He is a member of the Directors Guild of America and the directing faculty at USC School of Cinematic Arts.
MARY ANN GARGER (Academy Award Winning Producer) is currently a producer on the Paramount movie Tiger’s Apprentice. Garger began her career at Walt Disney Feature Animation, on the animated feature Pocahontas before segueing to a 20-year tenure at DreamWorks. There, she was among the first employees to build DreamWorks’ animation division, under Jeffrey Katzenberg, and rose through the ranks from Production Manager to ultimately Producer, working on titles such as Madagascar, Shrek, Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron, and Prince of Egypt. Following that, she produced for Warner Bros. She is a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences as well as a member of the Producers Guild of America, ASIFA and the Screen Actors Guild.

BOB YONG is a learning and development trainer at The Third Floor, Inc. where he leads the shot creator apprenticeship program. Prior to this, Bob contributed as a previs and postvis artist on multiple Marvel Cinematic Universe IPs including Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania, Loki, Thor: Love and Thunder, and Spiderman: Homecoming. Bob began his career after graduating from Ringling College of Art & Design where his film, The Controller, was nominated for a Student Academy Award in 2016. Bob is a graduate from University of Southern California’s class of 2020 where he obtained his Masters of Fine Arts in Animation & Digital Arts. During his time working in themed entertainment, Bob was the lead animator at Super 78, a themed entertainment creative studio based in Silverlake. He is also an adjunct professor of Animation and Visual Effects at Chapman University.

BARNET KELLMAN made his film directing debut with the 20th Century Fox screen adaptation of Key Exchange starring Brooke Adams. He went on to direct Dolly Parton and James Woods in Straight Talk for Disney, and Stinkers. He is perhaps best known as one of the preeminent directors of television pilots. He won two Emmy Awards and a Directors Guild Award for his work on Murphy Brown. In all, he has received seven Emmy and three DGA nominations for his work on the small screen. Kellman was educated at Colgate University and the Yale School of Drama. He received his Ph.D. from Union Institute. He is a professor of directing at the USC School of Cinematic Arts, is the founder of the school’s comedy program, producer of six editions of the biennial USC Comedy Festival, and holds the Robin Williams Endowed Chair in Comedy.

TIMOTHY MARX is an award-winning producer and director whose credits include dramatic and comedic television, feature films, documentaries, special event productions and concert films. Marx has produced for HBO, Disney, Warner Bros, CBS, ABC, TNT and PBS’s American Playhouse, among others. He is currently producing the hit CBS series Young Sheldon, now in its sixth season. Prior to that he completed five seasons of the hit ABC Family series Baby Daddy. He also oversaw production on Aaron Sorkin’s feature directing debut, Molly’s Game. His television credits include the HBO series Entourage, Arli$$, and Enlightened, as well as the HBO movie Citizen X. He is a member of the DGA, PGA and ATAS.
**ALYSSA MURPHY** is an executive at Jim Parsons and Todd Spiewak’s That’s Wonderful Productions, where she oversees development and production for both television and film. Alyssa began her career in alternative television at UTA, before moving over to Rough House Pictures, where she rose to creative executive. While at Rough House, she worked on a variety of television and film projects, including *VICE PRINCIPALS*, *TARANTULA*, and *FLOWER*. Alyssa has also held positions at Margot Robbie’s LuckyChap Entertainment, where she worked on the first season of the series, *DOLLFACE*, and Rotten Science, where she associate produced the Netflix series, *CABIN WITH BERT KREISCHER*.

**DRAMA**

**NELSON JIMENEZ**’s path began at The University of Texas at Austin where he earned a B.S. in Radio-Television-Film and Corporate Communication. He moved to Los Angeles and interned at Scott Rudin Productions, Scott Free Productions and America Ferrera’s Take Fountain Productions. After working at CAA in the Multicultural Business Development team, where he was a part of building strategies for clients from underrepresented backgrounds, he transitioned to The CW Network for an opportunity to focus on the television buyer space. There, he has helped oversee the creative development and production of drama series from various genres including *Superman & Lois*, *Kung Fu*, *All American: Homecoming*, *Tom Swift*, *Gotham Knights* and *The Winchesters*.

**LILIANA GRANADOS**, born in Mexico and raised in Los Angeles, studied Film and TV Production at USC. Liliana received her start as a mailroom clerk at CAA before entering the world of international film sales and financing at Sierra Affinity. She later worked as a Creative Executive at Viola Davis’ JuVee Productions where she executed her passion for developing projects that celebrate culture and diversity. Notably, Liliana participated in the development of TriStar’s *WOMAN KING* and helped shepherd Amazon and MRC’s upcoming G90 film. Granados served as the Director of Development at Eugenio Derbez’s 3Pas Studios, where she helped build the film drama department. Liliana’s mission is to build and guide the next generation of diverse storytellers by producing socially empowering films that inspire audiences globally.

**CHRISTINA PORTER** is a Director of Development across both Film and Television at Chernin Entertainment - where she serves as Co-Producer of Apple’s *Truth Be Told*. She was previously a television executive at Escape Artists Entertainment and an inaugural Time’s Up Who’s in the Room mentee. Prior to her move to LA, Christina was an intern at *The Late Show* and a Line Producer’s assistant on several films and tv shows including *Girl’s Trip* and *Hidden Figures*. A New Orleans native, she graduated from the University of Louisiana at Monroe.
AMANDA POPE: (Emmy Award winning Director) directing, producing, writing, and editing credits have focused on the dynamics of creativity in the arts. Her films Jackson Pollock Portrait, Stages: Houseman Directs Lear, and Cities for People have all been broadcast nationally on PBS. The Legend of Pancho Barnes and the Happy Bottom Riding Club was honored with a 2010 Los Angeles area Emmy in the arts and culture/history category; The Desert of Forbidden Art, which she directed, produced and wrote with Tchavdar Georgiev, has been broadcast in 2011 on PBS’ Independent Lens and honored with two nominations at the national 35th Annual Emmy News & Documentary awards, and CINE’s Masters Award for Excellence in Independent Filmmaking. Amanda is a Professor in production at the University of Southern California’s School of Cinematic Arts.

NANA ADWOA FRIMPONG is a Ghanaian-Canadian director, writer, and creative producer who works across narrative and documentary film to illuminate stories of women and people of color. Her advocacy led to the implementation of the first genderless bathrooms in the University of Toronto Scarborough, the publication of the first online print journal, MAYA, to honor women storytellers on campus, headlining a woman’s storytelling conference with Founder and Executive Director of the Me Too Movement, Tarana Burke, and hosting the annual 2017 TEDxUTSC conference as the first woman to do so. Nana moderates Q+As through SCA and IMAX, having spoken with filmmakers such as Kevin Feige, Miranda July, and several others. She served as a Peabody Awards Screening Committee Member in the documentary branch and was a George Lucas Scholar at USC where she completed her MFA. She currently serves as Chief of Staff at Breakwater Studios Ltd.

JANICE ENGEL (Award-winning filmmaker and show-runner) has applied her diversified talents to create a wide spectrum of documentaries, non-fiction television series and specials for major media companies in the United States and abroad. RAISE HELL: The Life & Times of Molly Ivins, her feature-length documentary had its world premiere at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, won the Audience Award at SXSW and numerous other festival awards. Released by Magnolia Pictures in 2019, RAISE HELL stayed in over 1000 theaters for an 18-week run from Alabama to Alaska. Under her own banner, Janice co-created What We Carry, a multi-media documentary series dedicated to preserving Holocaust survivors’ stories. Janice is a Professor at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco in Production. She has served on the Barnsdall Art Park Foundation Board and is a member of the International Documentary Association and the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

SOCIAL CHANGE

KATE OH is Development Executive for television and film at Monkeypaw Productions. Prior to joining the company, she worked at HBO Max in the Original Programming - Drama department. She began her career at CAA in entertainment marketing before transitioning into management and production at Anonymous Content. Kate served as a founding steering-committee member for Women Wednesday’s Next Gen Mentorship Program which seeks to uplift people of color in the executive pipeline. She was also a member of the inaugural class of the Time’s Up Entertainment: Who’s in the Room program geared towards empowering the next generation of producers and executives. Kate is a Bay Area native and USC alumna who spends her down time at the pottery studio.
LAMONIA DEANNE BROWN is a Creative Executive and Film Festival Specialist. As founder of The Gilchrist Group LLC, she consults entertainment companies in the areas of content development, strategy and communications, and live events. Currently consulting at OneFifty (a Warner Bros. Discovery brand under the Corporate Social Responsibility department), Lamonia manages the content development and strategy, plus communications for a slate of projects in the pre-development phase, as well as managing sponsorships and activations for over 40 identity-based film festivals that are supported by various entities in the company. In addition to her work with Warner Bros. Discovery, Lamonia created, and currently produces, the Essence Film Festival, where she serves as the Festival Director through her company, The Gilchrist Group. She holds firm to the belief that all storytellers must be heard in order to create the paradigm shift necessary to bring about true equity.

ZELLE BONNEY (Original Independent Film Executive) joined Netflix in 2018 after development and production experience in both NY and LA. Her job experience in film and tv extends from work at a production company, in cable television, and at film studios, including Universal, Warner Bros, and Fox. A graduate of Williams College, Zelle's studied art, culture, and economics in South Africa, Ghana, and India. Her goals to support writing for women and underrepresented communities was recognized by the Smithsonian and The National Endowment for the Arts.

GENRE

TONY DUCRET graduated from Wesleyan University’s Film Studies department with High Honors. Soon, Tony primarily worked in non-fiction television producing and writing broadcast programs for a host of networks including VH1, MTV, BET, FUSE, OWN, HLN & NAT GEO. In 2015, Tony longed to make a transition from non-fiction television to scripted entertainment. He suspended his television work in New York and accepted one of 24 positions in USC's prestigious Peter Stark Producing Program. While studying at USC, he maintained positions with Fox Searchlight Pictures, and with Creative Artists Agency in the Motion Pictures-Literary department. Tony received his MFA in Motion Pictures Producing from USC in 2017. Tony previously worked as the assistant to the Vice President of Production at Steven Spielberg’s Amblin Partners, and currently works as a Director of Development at Universal Pictures - released projects overseen include AMBULANCE, NOPE, BEAST, and VIOLENT NIGHT.

MATT ROSEN was a manager and independent film producer at Mazo Partners where he signed and developed writers and filmmakers such as Kryzz Gautier, Chris Grillot, Brendan McHugh, Sara Gambles and Crystal Bass, before joining RAIN. Last year he had five writers for 2022. Before managing, he was a development exec at the independent production company Armory Films where he worked on The Peanut Butter Falcon. He began his career at UTA and then moved on to work for film producer Andrew Panay. An avid cinephile at heart, Rosen is known for being a champion of independent cinema and for filmmakers. His favorite films are Ace in the Hole, Point Break, Almost Famous, Losing Ground, and All About Eve.
CHISOM UDE was raised in the suburbs of Atlanta by Nigerian immigrants and has enjoyed the journey of moving the needle in pop culture. As Creative Executive of Production & Development in Lionsgate’s Motion Picture Group, she is committed to creating entertaining authentic stories while empowering underrepresented voices. Chisom has worked both in brand and talent management, covering a range of facets within the entertainment industry, however, found her best creative fit in film development when she landed the job of assisting the President of Production at Lionsgate. Now as an executive, she manages over twenty features including the recent Unbearable Weight of Massive Talent, starring Nick Cage, and The Untitled Adele Lim Project starring Ashley Park.

ALEXANDER ALMOGABAR ZAHN is a manager at Netflix on the indie film team, which is run by Lisa Nishimura. Zahn recently served as VP of Acquisitions and Productions at Sony Pictures Worldwide Acquisitions. At SPE, which he joined in 2011, he was involved in the acquisition and production of dozens of films including Dope, helping bring it to Director’s Fortnight at Cannes 2015; 2017’s Marshall starring Chadwick Boseman; and 2018’s Searching. Among Zahn’s priorities has been championing projects from diverse filmmakers and especially Latinx stories. He worked on the Macro-produced Blast Beat, a coming-of-age drama written and directed by Esteban Arango, which debuted at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival. He also worked on I Carry You With Me, directed by Heidi Ewing.
O’SHEA™ MYLES is the current Film Festival Coordinator for the USC School of Cinematic Arts and owner of Eagle Peak Entertainment LLC, a development and media production company focused on diversifying the landscape of the entertainment industry. Always having found their voice through their creative work, O'Shea™ graduated from the USC School of Cinematic Arts with an MFA in Film & Television Production. They have since functioned as a writer, director, producer, and creative assistant on over 15 shorts, 5 features, and multiple commercials and music videos. Their accolades include working as the Associate Producer on the Oscar nominated student short *Amelia’s Closet* and their undergrad thesis film *All Out* being chosen for official selection at the Texas Black Film Festival. O’Shea™ is also an outspoken advocate for and member of the LGBTQ+ community and volunteers their time to supporting community organizations.

**PANELISTS + PITCH JURY**

**LILIANA GRANADOS**, born in Mexico and raised in Los Angeles, proudly studied Film and TV Production at USC. Liliana received her start as a mailroom clerk at CAA before entering the world of international film sales and financing at Sierra Affinity. She later worked as a Creative Executive at Viola Davis’ JuVee Productions where she executed her passion for developing projects that celebrate culture and diversity. Most notably, Liliana participated in the development of TriStar’s WOMAN KING as well as helped shepherd Amazon and MRC’s upcoming G20 film. Recently, Granados served as the Director of Development at Eugenio Derbez’s 3Pas Studios, where she helped build the film drama department. Liliana’s mission is to build and guide the next generation of diverse storytellers by producing socially empowering films that inspire audiences globally.

**KAUVEH KHOZEIN CARRERA** began his producing career at Scott Free’s TV department, assisting on such shows as *THE GOOD FIGHT*, the critically-acclaimed Paramount+ spin-off of *THE GOOD WIFE*, and the HBO Max sci-fi series, *RAISED BY WOLVES*. He then joined youth-focused production company Picturestart, where he developed the upcoming *GREASE* prequel series, *RISE OF THE PINK LADIES*, and a feature film adaptation of New York Times bestselling author Elizabeth Acevedo’s *WITH THE FIRE ON HIGH*, as well as leading the company’s non-fiction endeavors – hiring two-time Oscar-winning filmmaker Barbara Kopple for an undisclosed documentary project set in the adult film industry. He is currently VP of Development at Jolie Productions.

**KATE OH** is Development Executive for television and film at Monkeypaw Productions. Prior to joining the company, she worked at HBO Max in the Original Programming - Drama department. She began her career at CAA in entertainment marketing before transitioning into management and production at Anonymous Content. Kate served as a founding steering-committee member for Women Wednesday’s Next Gen Mentorship Program which seeks to uplift people of color in the executive pipeline. She was also a member of the inaugural class of the Time’s Up Entertainment: Who’s in the Room program geared towards empowering the next generation of producers and executives. Kate is a Bay Area native and USC alumna who spends her down time at the pottery studio.
ABI DAMARIS CORBIN is a Boston-bred writer-director-producer based in Los Angeles. Her feature debut BREAKING (Ca 892) co-written with Kwame Kwei-Armah, starring John Boyega, Michael K Williams, and Connie Britton, premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival in U.S. Dramatic Competition to strong critical acclaim and won a special jury award. Abi’s BAFTA shortlisted live-action short THE SUITCASE had its world premiere at the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival and screened worldwide as an official selection at over 50 festivals and on ShortsTV, ARTE, and HBO. Corbin entered college at age fourteen, graduating with a Master of Arts in Performance Studies. Her desire to grow as a creator then led her to USC’s graduate film production program where she earned a Master of Fine Arts. She is a Sony Pictures Directors Program alumnus.

LAMONIA DEANNE BROWN is a Creative Executive and Film Festival Specialist. As founder of The Gilchrist Group LLC., she consults entertainment companies in the areas of content development, strategy and communications, and live events. Currently consulting at OneFifty (a Warner Bros. Discovery brand under the Corporate Social Responsibility department), Lamonia manages the content development and strategy, plus communications for a slate of projects in the pre-development phase, as well as managing sponsorships and activations for over 40 identity-based film festivals that are supported by various entities in the company. In addition to her work with Warner Bros. Discovery, Lamonia created, and currently produces, the Essence Film Festival, where she serves as the Festival Director through her company, The Gilchrist Group. She holds firm to the belief that all storytellers must be heard in order to create the paradigm shift necessary to bring about true equity.
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