

DISABILITY IS DIVERSITY

ReelAbilities

FILM FESTIVAL LOS ANGELES

MAY 4-5, 2024



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STEPHEN DAVID SIMON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ALI EVERETT
ASST. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 4, 2024

Welcome, my friends, to the 6th year of the ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles.

As we celebrate this milestone, we're thrilled to continue honoring the remarkable talents and narratives emerging within disability communities. Through the medium of film, we persist in challenging perceptions, nurturing inclusivity, and sparking profound dialogues that transcend boundaries. Standing alongside our esteemed partners, we reaffirm our commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility.

To that end, RAFFLA 2024 continues to build on the successes of our previous five years. Our film selections, from shorts to features, are as powerful in presentation as they are wide-ranging in vision. Our panels address conversations that happen far too infrequently and must be a fundamental part of today's social discourse.

We uphold our tradition of filmmaker discussions throughout the festival, fostering engaging dialogues with some of Hollywood's most intriguing figures. This year, our lineup will feature insightful conversations with notable directors and producers, providing unique insights into the art and industry of filmmaking. Additionally, we will delve into important topics such as representation and diversity in cinema, sparking meaningful discussions on the future of storytelling.

As our communities continue to grow in visibility and adaptability, ReelAbilities continues to evolve. If you are new to the ReelAbilities family: welcome. If you are a ReelAbilities veteran: welcome back. Either way, thank you for taking this journey with us, wherever it may lead.

Sincerely,

Stephen David Simon
Executive Director

Disney Studios Content

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FILM FESTIVAL
LOS ANGELES**

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ABOUT

ReelAbilities

ReelAbilities Film Festival is the largest film festival in the United States dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of people with disabilities. Founded sixteen years ago in New York, ReelAbilities Film Festivals are now held annually in multiple cities throughout North America.

ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles is working together with the diverse and varied public of Los Angeles to gain a greater appreciation of quality cinema across abilities. We seek to engage entertainment industry executives, filmmakers, and the film-going public in a meaningful way to:


- Highlight the challenges and opportunities for artists with disabilities.
- Provide a forum for filmmakers and artists with disabilities to gather, share their experiences, and connect to a wider audience.
- Showcase technologies which make movie-going more accessible.
- Feature excellent films from around the globe that are fully inclusive and re-imagine the role of people with disabilities in film.

ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles provides entertainment industry leaders the opportunity to:

- Highlight their efforts to promote an inclusive, welcoming, and diverse workforce.
- Engage with stakeholders in the community to improve the visibility and inclusion of people with disabilities.

ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles is produced by the City of Los Angeles Department on Disability in partnership with the Grand Performances and ReelAbilities North America.

This will be the sixth year of ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles. Although we have worked to ensure our festival is as inclusive and accommodating as possible, we realize there is still work needed to be done to ensure a fully accessible experience for all. Please join with us in helping to achieve the vision of a city that is fully inclusive and provides everyone, regardless of ability, a sense of belonging in the City of Angels.



REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL

LOS ANGELES 2024 | MAY 4-5, 2024

SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, MAY 4

11:00 AM - 11:24 AM:

FESTIVAL OPENING REMARKS

11:24 AM - 1:10 PM:

REELABILITIES INTERNATIONAL SHORTS

This series highlights a selection of disability films from around the world.

IMAGINED TOUCH

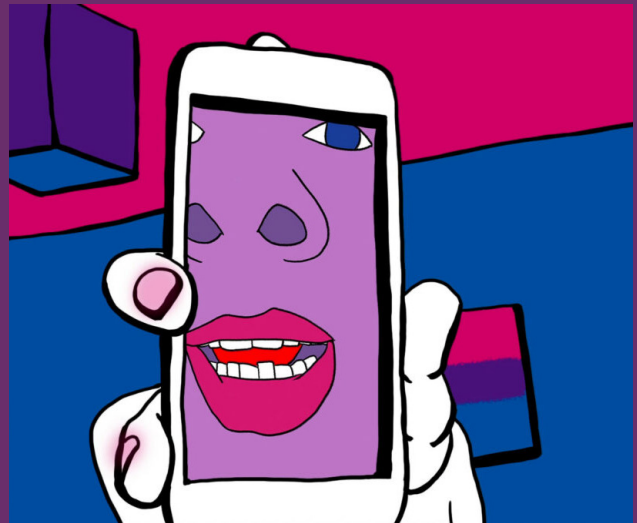
When two DeafBlind women ask a theater director to help them make a show about being deaf and blind, never in their wildest dreams did they imagine it would become an award-winning show.

*Australia | 2021 | 32 minutes | English
Directed by Sofya Gollan & Jodee Mundy Oam*

ACT OF GOD

Stuart's life is a mess. His caregivers are abandoning him and for good reason: he's a jerk, a fact that becomes quickly apparent to the new guy tasked with getting him out of bed. Stuart's commute to work is interrupted by the discovery of a \$100 bill lying on the sidewalk, leading him on a chase that forces him to reconsider his toxic ideal of self sufficiency.

*United States | 2022 | 22 minutes | English
Directed by Spencer Cook & Parker Smith*



COMING OUT AUTISTIC

Queer coming out stories are well documented, while telling friends, family, co-workers, and strangers that you are autistic is shown less often. But what is the experience of telling the world that you are autistic when you also identify as LGBTQ+?

*United Kingdom | 2022 | 4 minutes | English
Directed by Steven Fraser*

CULICIDAE

A late night intrusion leads to a life and death struggle.

*Australia | 2021 | 7 minutes | English
Directed by Greg Moran*

SATURDAY, MAY 4



DANCEABLE

Three dancers with disabilities find freedom through movement.

United States | 2022 | 23 minutes | ASL & English

Directed by Kelsey McGee

FLIRTING WITH POSSIBILITIES

Through trial and error, Harley, a deaf man, is determined to figure out the most effective way to flirt with the cute hearing guy he sees in the coffee shop. A glimpse of how it feels to communicate primarily via American Sign Language in a predominantly hearing, speaking, and English-using world.

United States | 2021 | 18 minutes | English

Directed by Garrett Zuercher

1:15 PM – 1:50 PM

Q&A: REELABILITIES SELECTION COMMITTEE



2:00PM - 3:20 PM

FEATURE FILM:

BEING MICHELLE

The astonishing story of a woman who survived incarceration in a system that refused to accommodate her needs as a deaf person with autism. Michelle's trajectory changed when she met Kim Law, a blind life coach who teaches in the prison. A story of redemption, this award-winning film is about the bonds between two women committed to thriving in a broken system and forging a path to healing.

United States | 2022 | 72 minutes | ASL & English

Directed by Atin Mehra

3:20 PM – 4:05 PM

Q&A: BEING MICHELLE

SATURDAY, MAY 4



4:10 PM - 5:50 PM

FEATURE FILM:

UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS

Peter is an intellectual outsider with an edge. He lives as a loner, until an unexpected visit from his upbeat—and possibly unhinged—neighbor Winona forces him out of his shell and on an impromptu road trip to rural Canada. As they journey into the wilderness, the odyssey turns into a search for their place in the universe.

United States | 2022 | 84 minutes | English

Directed by Juan Felipe Zuleta

6:00 PM - 6:50 PM

PANEL DISCUSSION:

REMOVING BARRIERS, TROPES, AND STIGMAS: DISCUSSING THE STEPS TO BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE IN FILM



6:50 PM - 8:20 PM

FEATURE FILM:

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

While navigating daily discrimination, a filmmaker who loves her unusual body searches the world for another person like her and explores what it takes to love oneself fiercely despite society's misconceptions.

United Kingdom | 2023 | 87 minutes | English

Directed by Ella Glendining

SUNDAY, MAY 5

KIDS' SUNDAY FUNDAY



11:00 AM – 11:15 AM

OPENING REMARKS

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

SHORT FILM: LOOP

Two kids at canoe camp find themselves adrift on a lake, unable to move forward until they find a new way to connect and see the world through each other's eyes. This film breaks new ground by featuring Pixar's first non-verbal autistic character.

United States | 2019 | 12 minutes | English

Directed by Erica Milson

FEATURE FILM: WISH

"Wish" welcomes audiences to the kingdom of Rosas, where Asha, a sharp-witted idealist, makes a wish so powerful that it is answered by a cosmic force. Together, Asha and Star confront a formidable foe—the ruler of Rosas, King Magnifico—to save her community and prove that when the will of one courageous human connects with the magic of the stars, wondrous things can happen.

United States | 2023 | 86 minutes | English

Directed by Fawn Veerasunthorn, Chris Buck



1:00 PM - 1:30 PM

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

PRESENTED BY SPECTRUM LABORATORY

1:30 PM - 2:00 PM

DANCE PERFORMANCE

PRESENTED BY STRAIGHT UP ABILITIES

2:00 PM - 2:30 PM

DANCE PARTY!

2:30 PM - 5:15 PM

**EASTERSEALS DISABILITY FILM CHALLENGE
2024 AND Q&A**

5:28 PM – 5:50 PM

SHORT FILM: MY DISABILITY ROADMAP

Samuel Habib, 21, wants to date, leave home, go to college. But he drives a 350-pound wheelchair, uses a communication device, and could have a seizure at any moment. Determined to find his path forward, he seeks out guidance from America's most rebellious disability activists. Will they empower him to launch the bold adult life he craves?

United States | 2022 | 22 minutes | English

Directed by Samuel Habib & Dan Habib



5:50 PM – 7:30 PM

FEATURE FILM: FORGET ME NOT

As 3-year-old Emilio prepares to start school, his family finds itself embroiled in a challenge all too common for children with disabilities – to secure the right to an inclusive education. Cornered in one of the most segregated education systems, New York City public schools, filmmaker Olivier and his wife Hilda turn the camera on themselves and their child with Down syndrome, as they navigate a byzantine system originally designed to silo children with disabilities.

United States | 2021 | 86 minutes | English
Directed by Olivier Bernier

7:30 PM – 8:31 PM

FEATURE FILM: SHADOW

Simon, Scott, and Sarah—a trio of activists with intellectual disabilities—hold a town hall meeting, desperate to save the world from the future impacts of Artificial Intelligence. What begins as a polite discussion quickly descends into bickering and chaos, and as the meeting unravels, they discover the greatest threat to their future is already in the room.

Australia | 2021 | 57 minutes | English
Directed by Bruce Gladwin



REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL PANELS

SATURDAY MAY 4



DAYN BRODER FREELANCE WRITER, COMICS EDITOR, DESIGNER, ADVOCATE

Dayn Broder is a big proponent of new and innovative work, specializing in graphic novels and comics. They are celebrated for being the creator of the original disabled Marvel Spiderhero “The Amazing Sun-Spider.” Dayn aims to help people realize their potential and craft the best stories possible. Dayn received a Master’s degree in Sequential Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design, and a BFA in Illustration with a concentration in Visual Communication. Dayn has been published in the Huffington Post and designed and edited more than 20 titles in their time at Webtoon. They are considered a prominent advocate for marginalized stories and storytellers, including stories by and for people of color, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, and other underrepresented persons.

REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL PANELS

SATURDAY MAY 4, 1:15 PM-1:50 PM

REELABILITIES SELECTION COMMITTEE Q&A



RANELL SHUBERT NONFICTION ACCESS INITIATIVE FUNDS PROGRAM MANAGER - INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION

Ranell Shubert is the Nonfiction Access Initiative (NAI) Funds Program Manager at the International Documentary Association (IDA), a movement aimed at narrative change through building power and community and increasing opportunities for nonfiction media-makers who identify as disabled. She also teaches Podcast Production at the University of Southern California. Before joining IDA and NAI, she produced the What’s Up With Docs Podcast and worked with the IIN4 Coalition to create artist development programs for creatives with disabilities. Ranell has ten years of experience in artist support programs and education, film festivals and industry programming, production, pitching, funding, advocacy, and distribution, and provides creative and professional consultation to nonfiction storytellers of various forms, from film, series, podcasts, and immersive content.



STEWART IREL ARTISTIC & CREATIVE DIRECTOR - GRAND PERFORMANCES

Stewart has been involved with the arts for over 20 years, having worked in the world of live theater and music performances as an artist, director, and producer. As the Managing and Technical Director of the theater company at Playhouse West — one of LA’s most prestigious acting schools — for just over a decade, he was a prolific writer and director, while lending his talents to productions with lighting/sound design, prop creation, and as co-director of the annual film festival. He spent 12 years at Universal Studios Hollywood managing the entertainment program on CityWalk, producing large events as well as booking live bands. He also led a nightly entertainment program where he auditioned, developed and promoted performers. The program was successful having some performers be discovered by industry executives who have signed them to recording and management deals.



HOLLY PULLAR BREATHWORKER, WRITER, AND FILMMAKER

Holly Pullar has over 20 years of caregiving experience for individuals with special needs, mental illness, and developmental disabilities, from children to adults. Holly also helped train law enforcement to help these individuals during a crisis. She’s also a breathworker. Beyond caregiving, Holly earned an MFA in screenwriting and has made multiple indie films. She and her ex-husband juggled three jobs and turned their home into an Airbnb to finance their acclaimed feature film ‘MY APOCALYPTIC THANKSGIVING,’ which won Best Script and Best Actor at the 2022 Entr’2 Marches in Cannes. She also has read scripts for six years at the Austin Film Festival and her film ‘plAy Date’ was nominated for best short short drama at the 2022 City of Angels Film Festival. She lives in LA with her two saucy kitties.



MODERATOR

ISAAC ZABLOCKI DIRECTOR OF FILM PROGRAMS - JCC MANHATTAN, DIRECTOR & CO-FOUNDER - REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL: NEW YORK

Isaac Zablocki is the Director of Film Programs at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan with a rich background in multiple aspects of the film industry. After graduating from Columbia University's film school, he worked at Miramax Films and later produced and directed feature films while also developing educational programs for the Department of Education. He has been instrumental in shaping the film landscape at JCC Manhattan, including the establishment of the Israel Film Center and the annual programming of several film festivals such as the Other Israel Film Festival, which highlights the stories of Arab and underrepresented populations in Israel, and the ReelAbilities Film Festival, the largest festival in the world showcasing films by and about people with disabilities.

REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL PANELS

SATURDAY MAY 4, 3:20 PM-4:05 PM

BEING MICHELLE Q&A



PANELISTS

ATIN MEHRA DIRECTOR/PRODUCER/DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Award-winning filmmaker Atin Mehra was born and raised in Varanasi, India and currently resides with his family in Los Angeles, CA. In 1999 Atin picked up his first camera and began taking photographs. Atin's uncanny ability to connect with individuals from behind the lens eventually led him into filmmaking. His own struggles with abuse and discrimination in India draw him to stories of marginalized individuals and communities. Atin lived in India until 2005, when he moved to the US with his wife and filmmaking partner, Mae Thornton Mehra. They have been producing social justice and impact driven films together for over 15 years at Orange Kite Productions. BEING MICHELLE (2022) is Atin's directorial debut for which he is a 2022 Firelight Media Impact Campaign Fund Grantee.



PANELISTS

DELBERT WHETTER EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Delbert Whetter is a 3rd-generation-born deaf producer and film executive with an educational background in law and business. He serves as Vice Chair on the Board of Directors of RespectAbility, a national non-profit organization that works with Hollywood to promote positive, accurate, diverse and inclusive media portrayals of persons with disabilities on TV and in film. Delbert also serves on the Disability Advisory Board of SFFILM. Delbert has two CODA (child of deaf adults) children, one of which has autism.



PANELISTS

MAE THORNTON MEHRA PRODUCER

Mae Thornton Mehra has been producing social justice and impact driven films with her husband and filmmaker, Atin Mehra at Orange Kite Productions for over 15 years. She prides herself on openly creative collaborations between film participants and diverse production teams as she believes that impact begins within the filmmaking process itself. In 2020, Mae and Atin co-founded the nonprofit Thriving Roots Initiative to further their work of social impact documentary filmmaking. Mae is Producer on BEING MICHELLE (2022), a documentary film that is helping to change the way Deaf and Disabled people are treated in criminal justice systems in the US and globally.



MODERATOR

CJ JONES PRODUCER, DIRECTOR, WRITER, ACTOR, COMEDIAN, MUSICIAN, DASL, MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER.

CJ is a living legend in the deaf and hearing world, acclaimed for his humor, creativity, and inspiration. He has done it all. Playing Joseph in the 2017 blockbuster "Baby Driver" directed by Edgar Wright, CJ became the first black deaf actor in an international Blockbuster. He also worked as the Creator of Navi Sign Language on the Avatar Sequels with the brilliant James Cameron. CJ founded SignWorld Studios as well as nonprofit SignLight, with a mission to create a film training program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. CJ Jones has received many awards including KCET/Los Angeles Local Hero of the Year Award 2008, NAD Breakthrough Awards 2017, SAG-AFTRA Harold Russell Award 2018, and a honorary degree from Gallaudet University 2020-2021.

REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL PANELS

SATURDAY MAY 4, 6:00 PM-6:50 PM

PANEL: REMOVING BARRIERS, TROPES, AND STIGMAS: DISCUSSING THE STEPS TO BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE IN FILM



PANELISTS

JASON WEISSBROD CO-FOUNDER - SPECTRUM LABORATORY

Jason has a Bachelor's degree in Directing and Acting for Film and Theatre. He has directed, produced, written, edited and starred in many films, television shows, web series, commercials and theatre productions. Jason became involved with the neurodiversity and autism community in Los Angeles almost 20 years ago working for numerous programs for nonprofits, schools and organizations. Over time many neurodivergent and autistic artists told Jason they wanted to make professional movies, record music and eventually work in the entertainment industry. This inspired Jason and co-founder, Garth Herberg, to create Spectrum Laboratory. Jason and Garth believe that teaming up with autistic and neurodivergent artists along with entertainment professionals stimulates everyone's creativity and talent. Jason says, "Show people what they can do and magic will ensue!" And it has! Jason feels blessed to be able to do what he loves every day and thanks to all who have supported Spec Labs over these past 9 years, since we launched in 2015! To learn more visit: speclabs.org.



PANELISTS

LILLIAN CARRIER AUTISTIC ACTRESS AND CONSULTANT

Most known for her recurring role as Drea in the TV Everything's Gonna Be Okay with appearances in NCIS New Orleans and As We See It. Lillian has consulted with script writers, show runners, and SAG to create a more inclusive environment for disabled actors. Being autistic, that is her expertise and often self advocates for herself and others on set. When she is not acting, she is a founder of the nonprofit OurTism that supports autistic adults. She has been interviewed by Emmy's: Advocating For The Authentic, Forbes: Sia's 'Music', Entertainment Weekly, InStyle: The Badass 50 and more.



PANELISTS

ANDREA JENNINGS, M.MUS. CONSULTANT, FILMMAKER, ACCESSIBILITY STRATEGIST, ACTRESS

Andrea Jennings, M.Mus., merges entertainment and civic leadership perspectives to integrate accessibility. As a consultant, filmmaker, TV host, accessibility strategist, and actress, she promotes social justice through disability culture in film, music, and art.

Andrea founded Shifting Creative Paradigms—Leveling the Playing Field®, producing content that champions authentic representation. Her groundbreaking streaming TV show "Access for All: Integrating Accessibility" spotlights accessibility opinion leaders. Andrea, a co-founder of RAMPD, has curated and moderated panels for ReelAbilities Film Festival and Lights! Camera! Access! Her work is recognized by Forbes, Billboard, The Hollywood Reporter, and The New York Times for its significant impact.



MODERATOR

ANDRAEA LAVANT ACTIVIST, COMMUNICATOR, INNOVATOR, STYLE ICON, CONSULTANT

Andraea LaVant is a black disabled woman boldly confronting the world's expectations of her existence by living fully and authentically. She has over 15 years of experience working within non-profit, corporate, federal, and philanthropic systems to advance access, equity, and inclusion for people with disabilities.

Equal parts grace and sass, Andraea is known both for her style and for her ability to speak truth in spaces where ignorance and injustice have historically prevailed. She is widely recognized for spearheading a global disability justice movement as an impact producer for Oscar-nominated film, Crip Camp, executive produced by the Obamas. LCI's specialty is helping brands "speak disability with confidence." Andraea's work and insights have been featured on Good Morning America, NBC, Essence, PAPER, the Root, Rolling Stone, and a host of other national media.

REELABILITIES FILM FESTIVAL PANELS

SUNDAY MAY 5



EMCEE

ELIZABETH JINZO FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - DESIGNATED EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES FOR INDEPENDENCE

Elizabeth Jinzo exemplifies over 30 years of experience as an advocate which was catalyzed by her daughter, Desirae, who was born extremely premature and with developmental delays. Elizabeth has worked as a teacher and as a regional center service coordinator for over 15 years. In 2008, she launched the non-profit DESI to help people with disabilities achieve independence.



EMCEE

JENNIFER KUMIYAMA SINGER, MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER, ACTRESS

Jennifer Kumiyama has earned national accolades from many publications including TV Guide – referring to her as “the girl in the wheelchair, who’s voice blew everyone out of the water”. She is the first performer in a wheelchair to ever be on any Disney stage being cast in Disney’s “Aladdin; a Musical Spectacular” at Disney California Adventure – showing the entire world that talent sees no boundaries. Jennifer can now be heard as the voice of Dahlia in Disney’s new hit animated feature WISH.

SUNDAY MAY 5, 1:00 PM-1:30 PM

KIDS' SUNDAY FUNDAY: MUSIC PERFORMANCE



ARTISTS

DOMONIQUE BROWN SINGER-SONGWRITER, MUSICIAN, ACTOR, AND CONTENT CREATOR

Domonique Brown's love for music and entertainment came at the young age of 5. Having inherited music from both sides of his family (Marvin Gaye is his great uncle), Domonique started writing music as a freshman in high school and is currently learning how to play guitar. Other than his love for music, he also loves to act. He's been in music theater since the age of 16 and has appeared in TV shows and movies including "Please Stand By", "Atypical", & "911".



ARTISTS

SPENCER GRIFFIN MUSICIAN

Spencer Griffin has played guitar for 24 years. He has been into both music and writing from a very young age. He is a sensitive soul who enjoys laughing, singing, and being with his cat, Clarence, and his girlfriend, Mackenzie. He is currently in the midst of an EP of his singles he has recorded with Spectrum Laboratory since 2021. Songs include the fun "Quirky Little Girl," the funny yet honest "Asperger's," the warmly ironic "If You're the One I Really Want," and the alt-folk-rock love song, "Mackenzie," plus two songs yet to be released.

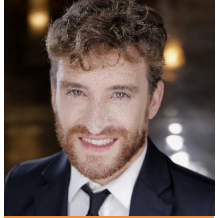
SUNDAY MAY 5, 1:30 PM-2:30 PM

KIDS' SUNDAY FUNDAY: PERFORMANCE & DANCE PARTY



SUNDAY MAY 5, 2:30 PM-5:15 PM

EASTERSEALS DISABILITY FILM CHALLENGE 2024 AND Q&A



MODERATOR

NIC NOVICKI FOUNDER/DIRECTOR AT DISABILITY FILM CHALLENGE

While 61 million Americans have disabilities, they are the most under-represented population in entertainment and media. As someone with a disability myself, I launched the Film Challenge in 2013 in response to the under-representation of talent with disabilities both in front of and behind the camera to give aspiring filmmakers the opportunity to showcase their work and provide them with meaningful exposure. In 2017, I joined forces with Easterseals – the nation’s leading nonprofit supporting people and families with disabilities – to expand the event, now known as the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge.



ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL LOS ANGELES

Announcement of Finalists

May 5, 2024 at 3 PM

Presented by:



BUDDY COMEDY



FILM SELECTION COMMITTEE



HOLLY PULLAR

Holly Pullar has over 20 years of caregiving experience for individuals with special needs, mental illness, and developmental disabilities, from children to adults. Holly also helped train law enforcement to help these individuals during a crisis. She's also a breathworker. Beyond caregiving, Holly earned an MFA in screenwriting and has made multiple indie films. She and her ex-husband juggled three jobs and turned their home into an Airbnb to finance their acclaimed feature film 'MY APOCALYPTIC THANKSGIVING,' which won Best Script and Best Actor at the 2022 Entr'2 Marches in Cannes. She also has read scripts for six years at the Austin Film Festival and her film 'plAy Date' was nominated for best short short drama at the 2022 City of Angels Film Festival. She lives in LA with her two saucy kitties.



KERIS JÄN MYRICK

Keris Jän Myrick is a VP of Partnerships at Inseparable, Podcast Host of Unapologetically Black Unicorns and serves on the Board of the Mental Health American (MHA) and Disability Rights California (DRC). Myrick has over 15 years of experience in mental health services innovation, transformation, peer workforce development and has numerous authored peer reviewed articles and chapters. She has held executive positions at local, federal, and national levels and was the Board President of National Alliance on Mental Illness. Myrick's work, research and advocacy has a focus on lived experience, digital therapeutics, race equity and disability justice. She was instrumental in the work of The Voice Awards that recognized community leaders and members of the entertainment industry for their efforts to raise awareness about the importance of behavioral health and spread the message that people can and do recover from mental health conditions and substance use disorders. Myrick is a Certified Personal Medicine Coach, has a M.S. in organizational psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology of Alliant International University and MBA from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management.



LINDSAY CRAIN

Lindsay is the Director of Content and Community at Undivided, sharing their mission to empower and support parents raising children with disabilities. She's also currently serving as a Family Support fellow in the CA-LEND (Learning and Excellence in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disorders) program at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and was recently appointed by the Governor to serve as a Community Representative on the State Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention. As the parent of a teenager with disabilities, she is dedicated to promoting inclusive education through her roles in state and local special ed advisory committees. Before venturing into disability advocacy, Lindsay worked in film acquisitions and development at companies including United Artists/MGM, Fine Line Features/New Line Cinema, Picturehouse, and the Meyers-Shyer Company/Disney. All of her roles have been rooted in showcasing storytelling as a catalyst for change.



RANEL SHUBERT

Ranell Shubert is the Nonfiction Access Initiative (NAI) Funds Program Manager at the International Documentary Association (IDA), a movement aimed at narrative change through building power and community and increasing opportunities for nonfiction media-makers who identify as disabled. She also teaches Podcast Production at the University of Southern California. Before joining IDA and NAI, she produced the What's Up With Docs Podcast and worked with the IIN4 Coalition to create artist development programs for creatives with disabilities. Ranell has ten years of experience in artist support programs and education, film festivals and industry programming, production, pitching, funding, advocacy, and distribution, and provides creative and professional consultation to nonfiction storytellers of various forms, from film, series, podcasts, and immersive content.





STEWART IREL

Stewart has been involved with the arts for over 20 years, having worked in the world of live theater and music performances as an artist, director, and producer. As the Managing and Technical Director of the theater company at Playhouse West — one of LA's most prestigious acting schools — for just over a decade, he was a prolific writer and director, while lending his talents to productions with lighting/sound design, prop creation, and as co-director of the annual film festival. He spent 12 years at Universal Studios Hollywood managing the entertainment program on CityWalk, producing large events as well as booking live bands. He also led a nightly entertainment program where he auditioned, developed and promoted performers. The program was successful having some performers be discovered by industry executives who have signed them to recording and management deals.

STEERING COMMITTEE



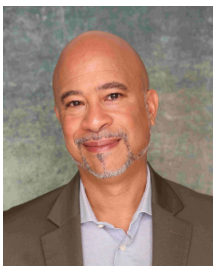
ALISA SCHLESINGER

Alisa Schlesinger is a founding member of ReelAbilities Film Festival Los Angeles. She serves as a Commissioner on the City of Los Angeles Commission of Disabilities. She has been an advocate for people with disabilities for over twenty-five years and is committed to expanding visibility and inclusion for people with disabilities in the entertainment industry.



JENNIFER SCHLESINGER

Jennifer Schlesinger is a founding member of ReelAbilities Los Angeles. She is the Associate VP at Alzheimer's Los Angeles, a local non-profit committed to helping families affected by Alzheimer's or dementia. RAFFLA 2021 will be the first time she has watched a movie since last year's Festival--it's been a tough year.



STEPHEN DAVID SIMON

Stephen David Simon is Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department on Disability, working to ensure that all City programs, services, activities, and facilities are accessible to all Angelenos. He previously served as the City's AIDS Coordinator, responsible for development, implementation and oversight of the City's HIV/AIDS policies and programs. He received his Juris Doctorate and Bachelors degrees at UCLA.



ALISON EVERETT

Ali Everett, J.D., M.P.A, is the Assistant General Manager for the City of Los Angeles Department on Disability. She has worked and volunteered in accessibility for over 25 years and worn many different hats and has a lot of experience that continue to inform her work. She has her B.A. from the University of California, Santa Barbara, has her M.P.A from Syracuse University, and has her J.D. from Syracuse University College of Law. Prior to joining the Department on Disability, she was the Accessibility Coordinator for City of Pasadena, where she worked on citywide compliance and inclusion initiatives to create a more inclusive community.





ELIZABETH FISH

Over the last 13 years of her career in entertainment, Elizabeth Fish has worked on various indie films as a producer, director, sound editor & mixer, camera operator as well as a production assistant & SAG background actor on various TV shows. She had the honor of producing and directing 4 short documentaries for Joni & Friends in 2015 for their world conference. Currently a Coordinator at Disney Television Studios for 20th Television. She is a leader on the Disability ERG for DGE as well as their Creative Pipeline team for disability and a member of 20th TV's Action Group where she spearheaded a panel discussion on disability in front of and behind the camera.



VERONIKA GRAVES

Veronika steps into the exciting role of Project Coordinator for the film festival, eager to apply her skills and ensure the event's success. With a deep-seated commitment to leaving a positive impact, she has dedicated her professional journey to supporting people, teams, and causes close to her heart. Veronika's expertise spans project budgeting, workforce management, creative writing, video editing, production and business accounting, CRM management, social media management, assistant directing, and campaign strategy development and execution.





CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY
EQUITY THROUGH ACCESS

Thank you to the Department on Disability Planning Committee!



Steven Banales
Kendra Cantrell
Dahlia Ferlito
Zenay Hayward
Amalia Karibyan
Angela Kaufman
Ling Kaufman
Gina Lombardo
Marie Lohr
Luis Mata
Claudia Natera
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Ashley Rodriguez
John Rodriguez

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Anna Ter Grigoryan
Gail Delgado-Heuzo
Salina Goytia
Kathy De La Paz
Carey Stone
Kayvon Wroten

**And thank you to all other City Departments and staff
who supported this year's festival.**



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