



CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES

CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES LAUNCHES NEW DIVERSITY FELLOWS INITIATIVE, SUPPORTED BY THE HARNISCH FOUNDATION

Announces “Breaking In: New Roadmaps,” Full Day Focused on Diversity at DOC NYC PRO, Co-Presented with The City of New York Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment on Thursday, November 19

NEW YORK, N.Y. (November 18, 2015) - Chicken & Egg Pictures announced today the launch of the Diversity Fellows Initiative, a new program that supports seven non-fiction projects helmed by first or second-time women filmmakers. The Diversity Fellows Initiative is supported by The Harnisch Foundation, and will bring together participants for six months of tailored mentorship, workshops, and programming with Chicken & Egg Pictures staff.

This inaugural year of the Diversity Fellows Initiative features a partnership with DOC NYC, the largest documentary film festival in the United States, which includes an educational conference for filmmakers called DOC NYC PRO.

With Creative Partner Chicken & Egg Pictures, DOC NYC has created “Breaking In: New Roadmaps,” an entire day dedicated to diversity at the festival, which is co-presented with The City of New York Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, and will take place on Thursday, November 19. The day features a full lineup of panels dedicated to exploring where diverse voices and emerging talent can get access to funding and mentorship, as well as develop their careers and artistic voice.

"Chicken & Egg Pictures is committed to discovering and elevating underrepresented voices in documentary filmmaking," said Executive Director Jenni Wolfson. "We are thrilled to be able to support these nine exceptional filmmakers through our Diversity Fellows Initiative, sponsored by The Harnisch Foundation. We're equally thrilled that The City of New York Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment will be joining us as a co-presenter of “Breaking In: New Roadmaps” at DOC NYC, which will share important best practices and resources for emerging artists of diverse backgrounds."

"The Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment is committed to supporting opportunities for New Yorkers of all backgrounds to build meaningful careers in the media and entertainment industry," said MOME Acting Commissioner Luis Castro. "New York is home to a talented and diverse community of artists. We are proud to partner with Chicken & Egg Pictures and DOC NYC to present “Breaking In:

New Roadmaps.” This day long series will provide invaluable insights to help up-and-coming storytellers forge and grow their careers as well as foster opportunities for diverse artists to create and share their stories.”

Acting Commissioner Castro will help kick off the day with a panel about breaking into filmmaking. The panel includes veteran filmmakers Fariyah Zaman (Remote Area Medical), Hao Wu (The Road to Fame) Yoruba Richen (The New Black) and Taj Paxton (Logo/Viacom), sharing lessons learned and advice on how to sustain their creative careers. Additional “Breaking In” panels will be featured throughout Thursday.

Fellows were chosen from over 400 applications to the Accelerator Lab for first and second-time women filmmakers, and received travel grants and stipends, which enabled them to come to New York and participate in Chicken & Egg Pictures’ signature story workshop, led by Creative Director Judith Helfand and Interim Creative Director Yvonne Welbon. As part of this workshop, they will receive personalized follow-up over the next six months to mark progress and receive feedback.

In addition to travel grants and stipends, fellows received an Industry Pass to DOC NYC, moving the filmmakers forward in their careers, enabling them a greater chance of finishing better films, and putting them in a stronger position when they apply for funding from other organizations. Participants also benefit from meeting and making connections with key industry professionals at DOC NYC.

THE CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES DIVERSITY FELLOWS: 2015-2016

BOUGHT, SOLD & RETURNED

Director: Christina Birkhead - New York

Bought, Sold & Returned is a revealing look into the human trafficking epidemic in Vietnam. The film follows multiple Vietnamese girls who bravely faced impossible odds to make it home after being sold, as they emotionally heal and attempt to regain honorable futures. This delicate film confronts the root causes of human trafficking in Vietnam and highlights shelter and reintegration services enabling many young women to regain their lives after escape.

About the Director: Christina's background in project management and behavior therapy makes for a perfect fit for storytelling and the problem solving skills needed to produce films. Christina has worked on two feature length documentary films as a line producer and has written and directed one short documentary for the non-profit Reach The Children in Uganda. *Bought, Sold & Returned* is Christina's first feature length documentary film.

FLUSH REVOLUTION

Director: Lily Zepeda - Los Angeles

Flush Revolution follows Jack Sim, AKA "Mr. Toilet," a Singaporean entrepreneur turned social activist who faces impossible odds doing work that others won't: re-imagining and rebuilding the toilet. Although he has gained global recognition for his work with the UN and the World Toilet Organization, he must make endless sacrifices with no paycheck and a staff of nine to get 2.4 billion people access to safe sanitation. As Mr. Toilet partners with an army of celebrities and world leaders, time will tell if his passion and innovation are a match for India's largest sanitation assignment in history.

About the Director: Lily Zepeda is a veteran journalist and storyteller. Zepeda has interviewed a variety of subjects ranging from Grammy award-winning musician Shirley Manson to Olympic athlete Meb Keflezighi. Through her experience with these interviews and her global travels throughout South America, Southeast Asia and India, Zepeda has had first-hand experience with global and social issues. In addition to journalism, Zepeda has worked both behind-the-scenes, managing TV commercial productions, as well as on-camera in commercial acting and hosting work in entertainment, food and product marketing. Zepeda has also worked as a Marketing Director for Whole Foods and was the Chief Operating Officer for a Los Angeles-based advertising firm.

LADY TOWN

Directors: Siyan Liu & Danni Wang - New York

The bustling southern city of Dongguan is both the manufacturing hub and the sex capital of China. Most of the sex workers were once factory girls. *Lady Town* explores these two worlds through the lives of two struggling young women. This film follows two young Chinese women with high hopes. Yun, a young mother, wants to escape the crushing drudgery of factory work by starting her own business; while Jolin dreams of becoming an actress, instead of working in the sex industry.

About the Directors: Siyan Liu received her MFA in Social Documentary Film from School of Visual Arts in 2015. She used to be a screenwriter for fiction films in China. She has been working as an assistant director in the Documentary Channel of China Central Television (CCTV-9) for two years. She established BANYAN FILM LLC with her partner Danni Wang in New York City.

Danni Wang is a Chinese filmmaker based in New York City who graduated from MFA in Social Documentary Film at School of Visual Arts in 2015. Her college student short documentary *Family Story* was officially selected by China Independent Film Festival in 2013 and Chinese Documentary Festival in 2013.

OBSTINATE TO LIVE

Director: Sahra Mosawi - Afghanistan

In Afghanistan where systematic abuses of girls rarely come to light, and seeking justice can be deadly, one young woman says "Enough." Her name is Khatera and this is her incredible story of love, hope, bravery, forgiveness and truth. It is also one of horrific abuse. Khatera was brutally raped by her father since the age of nine. Today she is twenty-three and raising two precious and precocious children—a daughter and a son—whom he sired.

About the Director: Sahra Mosawi is an Afghan filmmaker. She studied BA in Digital Film Production at London Metropolitan. Getting an MA in Documentary Film-making from University of the Arts London, she started to work as a lecturer for the Arts Department of Kabul University. Sahra was an organizer of Afghanistan Human Rights Film Festival, 2013. She is the founder of Afghanistan DocHouse based in Kabul, and co-founder of Anahat Vision and Films Production based in London. She has made several documentaries nominated for different film festivals and won awards.

RAJADA DALKA (NATION'S HOPE)

Director: Hana Mire -- Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Rajada Dalka is a feature documentary that incarnates the strong will and devotion of the Somali Women National Basketball Team amid an ongoing conflict.

About the Director: United Arab Emirates-based independent Somali filmmaker Hana Mire is the director and producer of the forthcoming documentary *Rajada Dalka*. She's enrolled in film production courses at New York Film Academy in Abu Dhabi, and has previously directed and produced short documentaries and narratives. In 2013, she won an award at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival for her mini-doc, *Silent Art*.

SWIMMING ON DRY LAND

Director: Michelle Sérieux - Kingston, Jamaica

Swimming on Dry Land examines the lives of young gay Jamaicans, at a time when the island is debating homosexuality publicly in politics, the press and in churches. The film's title makes reference to the concept of "fish," a term used in Jamaica to refer to homosexuals, but also references their marginalization, coupled with an equally strong determination by some of the characters to live and love in Jamaica, despite the odds.

About the Director: Michelle Serieux is an independent filmmaker from St Lucia currently residing in Jamaica. She holds a BA (Hons) in Media and Communication with Minors in Drama and Cultural Studies from the University of the West Indies Mona Jamaica campus, and a MA in Film/Cinema Studies from the Columbia

University School of the Arts in New York. In 2013 she became the first Caribbean recipient of the Tribeca Film Institute/World View Latin American Media Arts Grant for her first documentary feature *Swimming on Dry Land*. Michelle is a cultural activist interested in developing work in video and new media that addresses the social and developmental issues in the Caribbean and connects them to a larger Pan African / Global context. She is a committed art-ivist who is inspired by innovation, excellence and originality.

UNITED SKATES

Directors: Dyana Winkler & Tina Brown- New York

United Skates follows an underground subculture growing inside our country's last standing roller rinks. Fusing hip-hop with the speed of old school quad roller skates, this film shines a fresh light on the recurring pattern of racial struggle faced by African American artists, as it follows the next artistic movement still undiscovered by the American mainstream.

Unbeknownst even to the police, there are numerous public spaces across America that have been declared "neutral territory" by rivaling gangs. In the heart of South Central LA, Bloods and Crips put down their weapons each evening and peacefully coexist. These safe havens are found inside the faded walls of our country's last remaining roller rinks where an underground social and artistic movement is growing under the radar. It took nearly thirty years for mainstream America to discover the brilliance of jazz. Similarly, the blues, R&B, and hip-hop were met with prejudice before being artistically recognized. *United Skates* will use the talent and fresh style of this world to shine a very different light on racial stereotyping through the eyes of an ex-Crip wife turned community activist, and a skater so determined to save what he loves, that he is about to lose his wife and children in the process.

About the Directors: For over six years, Dyana Winkler worked for both the Sundance Film Institute and Tribeca Film Institute, reviewing and deliberating upon thousands of narrative and documentary grant submissions and honing her skills as filmmaker. Dyana also programmed for the Outfest Film Festival and frequently screens submissions for Chicken & Egg and the Sundance Documentary Film Program. Dyana holds a B.A in political science and economics from Mount Holyoke College and an MFA in screenwriting, directing and production, from EICAR in Paris. Fluent in French and Tibetan, Dyana spent nearly a decade living internationally, where she interviewed then recent refugees from Tibet for local TV stations and directed and produced a short documentary film on South Asian orphanages, which aired on BBC (Bhutanese Broadcasting).

Tina Brown is a Vietnamese-Australian filmmaker with a successful career in the film, television and commercial industry. Tina co-produced *Dear Mandela*, a feature-length documentary set in the slums of Durban which received an "I Believe In You"

grant from Chicken & Egg Pictures, as well as support from Sundance Institute and many others. Now predominantly working in sports production, Tina's work includes features and commercials for Red Bull, Puma, Gatorade, IBM, Levi's, Schick, Izod, MTV, NBC, ESPN, and Fox Sports; as well as sporting events from figure skating features for the Winter Olympics, to the Super Bowl, Tour de France and US Open Tennis. Prior to moving to New York, Tina created marketing and PR film campaigns for the distribution arm of major and independent studios including Paramount, Universal, MGM, DreamWorks, Miramax, Pixar, Disney and Village Roadshow.

ABOUT CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES

Chicken & Egg Pictures supports women non-fiction filmmakers whose artful and innovative storytelling catalyzes social change. Chicken & Egg Pictures envisions a world in which women non-fiction filmmakers, representing a range of diverse experiences and backgrounds, are fully supported to realize their artistic goals and vision, build sustainable careers, and achieve parity in all areas of the film industry.

Chicken & Egg Pictures was founded in 2005 by Julie Parker Benello, Wendy Ettinger, and Judith Helfand. Since inception, Chicken & Egg Pictures has awarded over \$4 million in grants and more than 5,200 hours of mentorship to over 200 films. Films supported by Chicken & Egg Pictures have won numerous awards, including Oscars and Emmys; they have shifted deeply entrenched attitudes; and they have changed policy on a variety of critical human rights and social justice issues. Chicken & Egg Pictures is a project of the Tides Center, a non-profit public charity. For additional information please visit: <http://chickeneggpics.org/>.

ABOUT THE HARNISCH FOUNDATION

The Harnisch Foundation is a small but mighty private foundation at the forefront of creative, progressive, spirited philanthropy. Founded in 1998, the HF's mission is to create a fair, equitable, and inclusive world by supporting the work of effective leaders and creative communities working to advance gender and racial equality and diversity, with a focus on women and girls.

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