



## CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9AM ET / 6AM PT ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2017**

### **CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES ANNOUNCES FINALISTS OF THE 2017 ACCELERATOR LAB**

#### **Ten Nonfiction Projects Helmed by Women Filmmakers Will Receive Grants, Creative Support, and Mentorship**

**NEW YORK, NY (March 9, 2017)** –Chicken & Egg Pictures, a leader in supporting women\* nonfiction filmmakers, announced today the ten projects participating in their 2017 Accelerator Lab program for first- and second-time nonfiction filmmakers.

With a special emphasis on underrepresented voices and timely, urgent stories, the Accelerator Lab is designed to support early career filmmakers in the completion of their first or second feature-length documentary, as well as to lay the groundwork for building sustainable creative careers in the field. In this year's Accelerator Lab cohort, 75% of the participants are filmmakers of color and 50% are international filmmakers. Chelsi Bullard, one of the grantees selected for this year's Accelerator Lab, said of her participation in the program, "I'm so excited to embark on my directorial debut with Chicken & Egg Pictures at my side. Through my film, *Kids Can Spit*, I want to tackle important issues affecting students in public schools, especially in light of our current political climate as it relates to education—the Accelerator Lab will provide me with the critical support and feedback I need from people who only want to see me succeed."

Selected through a competitive open call, the finalists for the program will each receive a \$35,000 grant, and year-long creative and professional mentorship. "More than a granting program, the Accelerator Lab provides our filmmakers with tools to succeed in a tough business at a critical juncture in their careers. By working toward gender equity, the Lab doesn't just accelerate filmmakers and their projects, but the documentary film industry itself," said Jenni Wolfson, Executive Director of Chicken & Egg Pictures. "This year we have an inspiring group of filmmakers whose projects take us all over the world and give us glimpses into diverse lives: from surfer girls in Bangladesh, to people fleeing violence in Latin America and seeking refuge in the US; from science rap battles in New York City, to an unlikely film studio in Uganda. We chose our cohort of filmmakers not only for the importance of their stories but for their artful approaches to these highly complex narratives. We're looking forward to seeing what the Accelerator Lab can do for them."

For additional information please visit: [www.chickeneggpics.org](http://www.chickeneggpics.org). The open call for the 2018 Accelerator Lab will launch in late-spring 2017.

\*Chicken & Egg Pictures' Accelerator Lab Open Call is open to self-identifying women (cis or trans) and gender nonconforming individuals.

### **2017 Accelerator Lab Grantees and Projects**

#### **The Surrender of Waymond Hall**

Directed by Jane Greenberg, US

*The Surrender of Waymond Hall* tells the redemption story of a young black fugitive on the run for the violent crime he committed a decade ago. With extraordinary access, the film follows Way as he wrestles with the excruciating decision to turn himself in, faces the watershed moment of surrender, and navigates a criminal justice system accused of discriminating against people just like him. His story exposes flaws in our societal institutions and in human nature, unfolding against a backdrop of national debates over the divisive racial impact of our criminal justice policies and the remarkable push to reform them.

#### **The Guardian of Memory**

Directed by Marcela Arteaga, MEXICO

The Juarez Valley, a region once known for cotton production, is now nothing more than burned down houses, empty towns, and memories. Carlos Spector, an immigration lawyer born in El Paso, TX, fights to obtain political asylum for Mexicans fleeing from violence. This is the story of Mexican men, women, and children seeking a respite from their tragedies by heading to their neighboring country, the US. It is also a story about the kindness and hope that still exists in people who have gone through hell, and about Carlos Spector's tireless efforts to keep memory alive.

#### **Kids Can Spit**

Directed by Chelsi Bullard, US

The feature documentary *Kids Can Spit* follows three New York City teenagers over the school year as they gear up to compete against one another at the Science Genius B.A.T.T.L.E.S. (Bringing Attention to Transforming, Teaching, and Learning Science), a science-themed rap competition. The competition's creator, Professor Chris Emdin, believes hip-hop is uniquely suited to teach science. For students Mannix, Genesis, and Jason, this battle is a way to beat society's odds while carving their identities and finding their voices. Pressure mounts on Chris to prove his innovative curriculum does what traditional science classes have failed to do: engage disenfranchised Black and Latinx youth to become proficient in science through rap.

### **The Surf Girls of Cox's Bazar**

Directed by Elizabeth D. Costa, BANGLADESH

Jahanara, Rifa, and Ayesha live in one of the poorest slums near the beaches of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. From a young age, the girls are sent to work in order to supplement the family income, and social norms dictate that they will be married when they turn 14 or 15 years old. The girls discover a newfound freedom in a surf club and find out they have the skills and talent to win competitions. This spurs their ambitions and they dream of becoming the first international female surfers of Bangladesh.

### **The Rashomon Effect**

Directed by Lyric R. Cabral, US

*The Rashomon Effect* is an immersive examination of the shooting death of unarmed teenager Michael O.D. Brown by police officer Darren Wilson. Eyewitnesses recount wildly differing stories of the incident, told through highly stylized flashbacks and exclusive citizen journalist video from the crime scene. As variant narratives layer and collide, the film draws viewers inside multiple realities of the shooting incident, incisively probing human perception and the nature of truth. When the Department of Justice launches an investigation into Michael Brown's death, these opposing eyewitness narratives become key evidence, revealing the uncertainty of official conclusions.

### **Born in China**

Directed by Nanfu Wang and Lynn Zhang, CHINA

How much control does a person have over their own life? In China, state control begins before a child is even born.

### **Unaccompanied Children**

Directed by Alexandra Codina, US

*Unaccompanied Children* intimately follows several children who fled gruesome gang violence in Central America to seek refuge in the United States. In Florida, four siblings face a subjective immigration system where those fleeing the same circumstances can have different outcomes. Back home in Honduras, a center receives recently deported children and families, a temporary respite before they face the violence they once fled. As tensions rise in the US. with heightened anti-immigrant tactics, the children cling to hope; they sacrificed too much to not believe in miracles.

### **Lights Camera Uganda** *[working title]*

Directed by Cathryne Czubek and Hugo Perez, US

Against all odds, former bricklayer and teacher Isaac Nabwana has turned his small home in the slums of Uganda's capital city into the Wakaliwood action movie studio. After 10 years and 40+ films, Wakaliwood has become an overnight international media sensation, inspiring others around the world to follow in his footsteps. When New York film nerd Alan Hofmanis shows up on his doorstep one day, everything is bound to change.

### **Rajada Dalka/Nation's Hope**

Directed by Hana Mire, SOMALIA

Somalia's newly revived Women's Basketball team seeks to inspire their nation as they overcome immense challenges in their first season since the outbreak of war in 1991. To continue to play the game they love, the team must defy both religious leaders and violent militant groups that believe that their sporting ambitions are un-Islamic. They must also battle against the sexism faced by women in sports across the world.

### **People I Know**

Directed by Zofia Pregowska, POLAND

*People I Know* is a tragicomedy vérité about a young married couple living in an old trailer. Prone to nervous breakdowns, Michael is unable to stand consumer society and becomes a street musician. His wife Nathalie is an oncology nurse. One day, Nathalie discovers that she wants to own a house so much that she's ready to take on a lifelong loan.

### **ABOUT CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES**

Chicken & Egg Pictures supports women nonfiction filmmakers whose artful and innovative storytelling catalyzes social change. Chicken & Egg Pictures envisions a world in which women nonfiction 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 \$5.2 million in grants and thousands hours of mentorship to over 220 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.

### **PRESS CONTACT**

FRANK PR | 646.861.0843

Stephanie Davidson | [Stephanie@frankpublicity.com](mailto:Stephanie@frankpublicity.com)

Clare Anne Darragh | [Clareanne@frankpublicity.com](mailto:Clareanne@frankpublicity.com)