NEW YORK, NY (JUNE 29, 2021)—Chicken & Egg Pictures, a leader in supporting women and gender nonconforming filmmakers, announced today the newest grantees of their Project: Hatched program for feature-length documentary impact. The filmmaking teams behind five projects will receive tailored mentorship and $10,000 towards their film’s impact campaigns.

The first round of Project: Hatched 2021 granted films tell stories of drug detoxification and radical community care (*Dope is Death*); New York’s uneven criminal justice system, navigated by two marginalized communities (*Down a Dark Stairwell*); education as a way to heal from the harm of the prison industrial complex (*Since I Been Down*); Black women organizers (*Unapologetic*); and agricultural labor in Central California (*Fruits of Labor*) with a coming-of-age lens.

“Each of these films tells a story about racial, economic, or workers justice in the United States and marks a critical moment in our social history,” said Program Director Lucila Moctezuma. “Their directors are uniquely positioned to create change and propel us toward a more equitable future, and Chicken & Egg Pictures is excited to support them with funding and programmatic support to further the impact of these important films.”

These five directors are visionary women at different junctures of their careers, representing a range of expertises and backgrounds. *Since I Been Down* director Gilda Sheppard is a founder and faculty at Freedom Education for Puget Sound, an organization offering college courses for incarcerated women; and two emerging filmmakers in the cohort (Ashley O’Shay and Emily Cohen Ibañez) bravely made their directorial feature debut in a year of uncertainty and hardship.

Past participants of the Project: Hatched program have used their films to amplify and move the dial on critical social issues: *Coded Bias* director Shalini Kantayya’s impact plans fought against the advancement of racist facial recognition technology with the Universal Declaration of Data Rights as Human Rights; and in conjunction with her film's PBS broadcast, *Belly of the Beast* director Erika Cohn launched an action campaign calling for reparations for victims of forced sterilization in California.

Project: Hatched 2021 is generously supported by The New York Community Trust.
**The Project: Hatched 2021 participants are:**

**Dope is Death**  
**Director:** Mia Donovan (CANADA)  
**Producer:** Bob Moore  
*Dope Is Death* tells the story of how radical politics and direct community action birthed the first acupuncture drug detoxification program in America.

**Down a Dark Stairwell**  
**Director:** Ursula Liang (UNITED STATES)  
**Producer:** Rajal Pitroda  
A Chinese-American police officer kills an unarmed Black man in a dark stairwell of a NYC housing project, igniting a complicated fight for accountability and justice.

**Fruits of Labor**  
**Director:** Emily Cohen Ibañez (UNITED STATES, COLOMBIA)  
**Producer:** Emily Cohen Ibañez  
A teenage farmworker dreams of graduating high school, when ICE raids in her community threaten to separate her family and force her to become her family's breadwinner.

**Since I Been Down**  
**Director:** Gilda Sheppard (UNITED STATES)  
**Producers:** Saman Maydani, June Nho Ivers  
**Producer and Lead Impact Strategist:** Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss  
**Impact Team:** YEA! Impact  
In America’s backyard, a community held captive by policies targeting gangs and drugs sacrifices their youth for a false sense of justice and safety. Nearly forty years later, a true path to justice and healing is led from inside their prison walls.

**Unapologetic**  
**Director:** Ashley O'Shay (UNITED STATES)  
**Producers:** Ashley O'Shay, Morgan Elise Johnson  
**Impact Producer:** Naeema Jamilah Torres  
Meet Janaé and Bella, two fierce abolitionists whose upbringing and experiences shape their activism and views on Black liberation.

Note: The parentheses next to the directors’ names indicate the filmmakers’ nationalities and/or countries of origin.

**ABOUT CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES**  
Chicken & Egg Pictures supports women nonfiction filmmakers whose artful and innovative storytelling catalyzes social change. We envision an inclusive media industry in which women filmmakers, representing a range of experiences and backgrounds, are fully supported to realize their artistic goals, and to build sustainable and fulfilling careers.
Chicken & Egg Pictures was founded in 2005 by Julie Parker Benello, Wendy Ettinger, and Judith Helfand. Since inception, the organization has awarded over $8 million in grants and thousands of hours of creative mentorship to over 340 filmmakers. For additional information please visit: http://chickeneggpics.org/.

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