



EIGHT DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS NAMED 2024 CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES AWARD RECIPIENTS, MORE THAN \$600K IN NEW GRANTS

The program addresses economic and career obstacles for women and gender-expansive documentary filmmakers, and each awardee receives a \$75K grant and year-long mentorship

New York, NY (January 31, 2024)—[Chicken & Egg Pictures](#), the organization dedicated to offering support and funding for women and gender-expansive documentary filmmakers, has announced more than \$600,000 in new grants to eight recipients of its 2024 Chicken & Egg Award, with each receiving a \$75,000 grant—a \$50,000 unrestricted career grant and \$25,000 to be applied to a project the filmmaker will work on during their award year. The recipients are **Alisa Kovalenko, Beth Aala, Jumana Manna, Katy Lena Ndiaye, Nailah Jefferson, Sierra Pettengill, Ursula Liang, and Violet Du Feng.**

The [Chicken & Egg Award](#) was created to recognize advance-stage women and gender-expansive nonfiction filmmakers who are poised to reach new heights in their careers. It also acknowledges the structural barriers they face that prevent them from pursuing a full-time career as independent storytellers.

“The Chicken & Egg Award acknowledges the fact that even accomplished filmmakers often encounter significant obstacles, such as gender, race, and age, that make them feel as if they are starting over,” said **CEO of Chicken & Egg Pictures, Jenni Wolfson.** “The program provides these talented filmmakers—some of whom we’ve supported in previous years and others who are new to Chicken & Egg Pictures—with the unrestricted support they need to ‘break through.’”

“The grantees for this year are not only established directors and producers but are highly respected innovators who are shaping the documentary industry through their artistry and leadership,” said **Kiyoko McCrae, Program Director, Chicken & Egg Pictures.**

The 2024 cohort of multidisciplinary filmmakers includes Emmy®, Peabody, and Guggenheim Fellowship winners. Their films have been showcased at festivals and museums worldwide, and their body of work has significantly contributed to reshaping dominant narratives and allowing us a greater understanding of the world we live in. This year’s honorees explore the ongoing effects of colonialism around the world; reexamine historical narratives via extensive archival research; and tell nuanced narratives that challenge stereotypes on identity politics. They embed in our memories the life stories of African American women and make us aware of the ongoing effects of war in Ukraine. They remind us that sorority is also a form of resistance and shine a light on the ordinary people doing extraordinary things in forgotten corners of

America.

Since 2016, the Chicken and Egg Award has granted unrestricted funding to accomplished industry veterans. For the first four years, the program supported US-based filmmakers, before expanding globally. In 2023, Chicken & Egg Pictures grew the grant cohort from six to eight directors. Each Awardee receives a \$75,000 grant and year-long tailored mentorship, attends a creative retreat, participates in monthly peer-to-peer cohort calls, and travels to a major film festival where Chicken & Egg Pictures hosts a culminating retreat and facilitates high-level industry networking opportunities around distribution, funding, and more.

Elaisha Stokes, Senior Program Manager, Chicken & Egg Pictures, said, “Filmmakers are experts on what they need to push their artistic and personal development forward. Heavy oversight often stonewalls creative breakthroughs. Chicken & Egg Pictures believes that filmmakers, especially those who face barriers related to their gender, race, class, and location, should have financial freedom and flexibility as they embark on new projects. Unrestricted funding remains the cornerstone of the Chicken & Egg Award, and we have witnessed extraordinary breakthroughs with past winners by adhering to this model.”

Additional information about the Chicken & Egg Award recipients:

Alisa Kovalenko (UKRAINE)

Alisa Kovalenko (she/her) is a Ukrainian award-winning documentary director, based in Kyiv. Her films *Alisa in Warland* (IDFA 2015) and *Home Games* (Sheffield DocFest 2018) have played at over 150 festivals and won multiple awards. Her latest full-length documentary, *We Will Not Fade Away*, had its World Premiere at Berlinale Generation 2023, was selected for the European Film Awards, and was designated best Ukrainian documentary of 2023 by the Ukrainian Film Academy.

Beth Aala (PHILIPPINES/USA)

Beth Aala (she/her) is a Filipina-American documentary filmmaker. She has won three Emmy® Awards and a Peabody Award for her work at HBO. Beth’s credits include *Uncharted* (Tribeca Festival, 2023); *This is Brighton* (Newport Beach Film Festival, 2023); the News and Documentary Emmy®-nominated films *Made in Boise* (AFI Docs, 2019) and *Supermensch: The Legend of Shep Gordon* (TIFF 2013); and *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman* (Sundance, 2017). Beth’s films have been supported by ITVS, IDA, Chicken & Egg Pictures, NYSCA, and WMM, and her work has been featured on HBO, PBS, MTV, Discovery, and A&E.

Jumana Manna (PALESTINE)

Jumana Manna (she/her) is a visual artist and filmmaker. Her work in sculpture, filmmaking, and writing explores how power is articulated, with a focus on the body and the land in relation to colonial inheritances. She was raised in Jerusalem and lives in Berlin. Her latest film, *Foragers* (2022) was a New York Times Critics’ Pick, played at over 80 film festivals, and won multiple awards.

Katy Lena Ndiaye (SENEGAL)

Katy Lena Ndiaye (she/her) is a filmmaker based in Dakar and Brussels. Her cinematic work focuses on contemporary Africa and its relationship to history and memory, with a particular

emphasis on women's perspectives about transmission and legacy. Parallel to her career as a filmmaker, she worked in television from 2000 to 2018. Since 2013, she has been running IndigoMood Films, which supports African authors in their desire for cinema, bringing their stories and visions to the screen.

Nailah Jefferson (UNITED STATES)

Nailah Jefferson (she/her) is a New Orleans-born filmmaker whose work spans fiction and nonfiction. Nailah's most recent film, *Commuted*, tells the story of Danielle Metz, a woman whose triple-life drug sentence was commuted by President Obama after serving 23 years. *Commuted* premiered at the 2023 New Orleans Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award for Best Documentary. Nailah's second feature documentary, *Donyale Luna: Supermodel* premiered on HBO and Max in September 2023, and was hailed as one of the best films of 2023 by *The Huffington Post*.

Sierra Pettengill (UNITED STATES)

Sierra Pettengill (she/her) is a filmmaker from Brooklyn whose work focuses on the warped narratives of the American past. She directed the all-archival film, *RIOTSVILLE, USA*, which premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award. Her films have played in festivals and venues around the world, including Sundance, Locarno, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Ursula Liang (UNITED STATES)

Ursula Liang (she/her) is an award-winning director and producer with 25 years of experience in storytelling. After working in print for *ESPN The Magazine*, *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, and others, she directed three critically-acclaimed feature documentaries, *9-Man* (2014), *Down a Dark Stairwell* (2020), and *Jeanette Lee Vs.* (2022). Ursula is a member of Film Fatales, A-DOC, IDD, and is the Board Vice President of Brown Girls Doc Mafia. She lives in Oakland, California.

Violet Du Feng (CHINA)

Violet Du Feng (she/her) is an award-winning documentary filmmaker whose films provide nuanced, intimate, and provocative perspectives on larger social issues. Violet has directed, produced, and executive produced more than ten films over the past decade including the most recent Oscar® Shortlisted *Hidden Letters* (2022) and CPB/PBS special programming *Harbor From The Holocaust* (2020)

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

For more information on these filmmakers and their work, visit this [link](#).

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ABOUT CHICKEN & EGG PICTURES

Chicken & Egg Pictures shapes a more equitable and just world with the catalytic power of documentary films by providing funding, mentorship and industry access to a global community of women and gender-expansive filmmakers. Our work is done through an intersectional lens that acknowledges that various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other, slowing or even halting people's careers. It is our mission to disrupt and help dismantle these barriers.

Since its inception, Chicken & Egg Pictures has awarded over \$12 million in grants and thousands of hours of creative mentorship to over 500 filmmakers. For additional information please visit: <http://chickeneggpics.org/>.