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Contact: Seanna Hore, Ginsberg/Libby  
[Seanna.Hore@ginsberglabby.com](mailto:Seanna.Hore@ginsberglabby.com)

Gladys Santos, Ginsberg/Libby  
[Gladys.Santos@ginsberglabby.com](mailto:Gladys.Santos@ginsberglabby.com)

### **FILM INDEPENDENT SELECTS FILMMAKERS FOR 2023 DOCUMENTARY LAB**

LOS ANGELES (May 24, 2023) — Film Independent, the nonprofit arts organization that produces the Spirit Awards, announced the 7 filmmakers and 6 projects selected for its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Documentary Lab. The Lab is an intensive program designed for filmmakers currently in post-production on their feature-length documentary films and provides creative feedback. The program advances the careers of its Fellows by introducing them to film professionals who can advise on both the craft and business of documentary filmmaking.

“Documentary filmmakers remain at the forefront of innovative cinema, telling real stories with urgency and accessibility,” said Daniel Cardone, Manager of Nonfiction Programs for Film Independent. “Our selections for the 2023 Film Independent Documentary Lab emphatically demonstrate this, tackling important cultural issues and events with compassion and limitless creativity.”

During the Lab, filmmakers will work with Lead Creative Mentors Chris Shellen (*Mickey: The Story of a Mouse, Marwencol*) and Ivete Lucas (*Naked Gardens, Pahokee*), and Editing Mentors Bo Mehrad (*The Punk Singer, Call Me Miss Cleo*) and Amy Foote (*Hail Satan?, All the Beauty and the Bloodshed*). Additionally, Fellows will be introduced to advisors and guest speakers.

This year’s Guest Speakers include Isabel Castro (*Mija*), Keetin Mayakara (*Free Solo*), Larissa Rhodes (*The Social Dilemma*), Diane Quon (*Bad Axe*), Alysa Nahmias (*Wildcat*) and Alece Oxendine (Columbia University), along with industry partner the UCLA Doc Law Clinic.

Celebrating 30 years in 2023, Film Independent Artist Development programs promote unique, independent voices by helping filmmakers create and advance new work through Project Involve, Filmmaker Labs (Directing, Documentary, Episodic, Producing and Screenwriting) and the Fast Track Finance Market and Fiscal Sponsorship, as well as through Grants and Awards that provide over one million dollars annually to visual storytellers.

The Cayton-Goldrich Family Foundation Fellowship is a \$10,000 grant that is awarded to a Jewish filmmaker accepted into a Film Independent Artist Development Program. This unrestricted cash grant is awarded to 2023 Documentary Lab Fellow Alina Simone, participating in the program with her film *Black Snow*.

Notable past Documentary Lab-supported projects include Academy Award-nominated films *Ascension* by Jessica Kingdon; *Minding the Gap* from Bing Liu and Diane Quon; Sara Dosa and Shane Boris' *Seer and the Unseen*; Sarita Khurana and Smriti Mundhra's *A Suitable Girl*; Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown's *United Skates* and Kit Vincent and Ed Owles' *Red Herring*, which recently premiered at the True/False film festival.

The Documentary Lab is supported by the Cayton-Goldrich Family Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more information on the Documentary Lab and the projects supported through the program, please contact Daniel Cardone, Manager of Nonfiction Programs, at [dcardone@filmindependent.org](mailto:dcardone@filmindependent.org). Additional information and an application form can be found at [filmindependent.org](http://filmindependent.org).

### **The 2023 Documentary Lab projects and Fellows are:**

#### ***Black Snow***

Director: Alina Simone

Producer: Kirstine Barfod

#### **Cayton-Goldrich Family Foundation Fellowship Recipient**

Logline: When residents of a remote Siberian coal mining settlement discover an old Soviet mine has caught fire beneath their neighborhood, they turn to homemaker-turned-journalist Natalia Zubkova for help. But after Natalia's independent news coverage goes viral, she finds herself the target of a massive government disinformation campaign.

#### ***Flamingo Camp***

Director: Chris Coats

Logline: Set in the off-grid squatter town known as Slab City, *Flamingo Camp* documents the thriving golden days of a queer and trans community on the fringe of society and its tragic collapse after one of its members is brutally murdered.

#### ***For Venida, For Kalief***

Director/Producer/Cinematographer: Sisa Bueno

Logline: A late mother's poetry echoes a New York movement for criminal justice reform. This lyrical film is an intentional departure from current storytelling approaches, and will instead focus on his impact and the potential closing of Rikers Island to inspire us to reimagine a new legacy for Kalief Browder.

#### ***Matinínó***

Director: Gabriela Diaz Arp

Logline: *Matinínó* tells the story of the Villanueva family, a multi-generational family of Puerto Rican women transforming their experience of violence into a science fiction film.

#### ***She Cried That Day***

Director: Amanda Erickson

Logline: *She Cried That Day* investigates the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's crisis through the lens of one woman haunted by her sister's unsolved murder. We bear witness as she battles police

and societal apathy towards MMIW thus laying bare the complex story of America's treatment of Indigenous peoples.

### ***You Have the Floor***

Director: Adina Luo

Logline: *You Have the Floor* follows a nationally-ranked high school Model United Nations team, where aspiring ambassadors debate the world's most pressing issues. As diplomatic strategies collide and social tensions mount, each of our students discovers what victory truly means to them.

### **ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT**

For over 40 years, Film Independent has helped filmmakers get their projects made and seen. The nonprofit organization's core mission is to champion creative independence in visual storytelling in all its forms, and to foster a culture of inclusion. We support a global community of artists and audiences who embody diversity, innovation, curiosity and uniqueness of vision.

In addition to producing the [Film Independent Spirit Awards](#), the organization supports creative professionals with [Artist Development](#) programs, grants and labs. Signature mentorship program [Project Involve](#) fosters the careers of talented filmmakers from underrepresented communities. Education events and workshops equip filmmakers of all ages and experience levels with tools and resources. [Global Media Makers](#), a cultural exchange program produced in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, provides career-building opportunities for international film professionals. And year-round screening series [Film Independent Presents](#) offers a robust program of unique cinematic experiences, including screenings, conversations, Live Reads and Bring the Noise musical events.

For more information or to become a Member, visit [filmindependent.org](http://filmindependent.org).

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