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FILM INDEPENDENT UNVEILS LOS ANGELES-THEMED SHORT FILMS
BY CLASS OF 2023 GLOBAL MEDIA MAKERS FELLOWS

LOS ANGELES (August 11, 2023) – Film Independent, the nonprofit arts organization that produces the Film Independent Spirit Awards, has released four short films directed by Global Media Makers (GMM) Fellows selected to participate in its spring 2023 LA Residency. GMM, presented by Film Independent and the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, is an innovative mentoring initiative and cultural exchange program that builds bridges and fosters relationships between international filmmakers from diverse regions of the world and American filmmakers and industry professionals. The films were captured on iPhone 14 Pro with color grading provided by Picture Shop, and this is the seventh iteration of the workshop.

GMM Fellows participate in filmmaking tracks focused on screenwriting, directing, creative development and documentary filmmaking, where they develop their current projects with a team of U.S. mentors. The program also provides master classes, industry sessions, field trips, cultural engagement and networking opportunities. The shorts are a result of a collaborative workshop in which this year’s GMM Fellows were paired with local Film Independent Fellows to create an impressionistic film encompassing their personal views of Los Angeles.

“As the ultimate vision of our program is to build bridges between American and international filmmakers, it is very rewarding to see our Global Media Makers connect with our Los Angeles Fellows to discover LA through a creative dialogue expressed in these poignant 60 second films”, said María Raquel Bozzi, Film Independent’s Senior Director of Education & International Initiatives. “An iPhone, with its high-quality capture, ease of use and cinematic workflow capabilities, is a perfect tool for them to freely explore the visual richness of our dynamic Angeleno community.”

The Film Independent Fellows who contributed to these shorts published today are Martina Silcock, Imani Davis, Sue-Ellen Chitunya, Winter Dunn, and Stephanie Osuna-Hernandez. They collaborated with filmmakers Asmaa Gamal from Egypt, Abdullah Al-Ghaly from Libya, Mahde Hasan from Bangladesh, and Rajeela Shrestha from Nepal.

Previous Fellows who have participated in this collaborative workshop include Andrew Ahn (director, Fire Island) and Lulu Wang (director, The Farewell).

To find out more about this program and to see the four short films listed, head to the Film Independent blog and watch on Film Independent's YouTube channel.
Egypt

*City Walls Can Talk*

Director: Asmaa Gamal

An Egyptian filmmaker is captivated by the beauty and freedom of the varied art on Los Angeles’ walls. In Egypt, street art is forbidden, and she explores the similarities and differences between the two cultures and how walls can speak to us.

Libya

*Once Upon a Time in LA*

Director: Abdullah Al-Ghaly

A friendly, glamorous city with dazzling billboards, where the manifestations of richness and poverty, luxury cars, and the unhoused coexist.

Bangladesh

*There We Were*

Director: Mahde Hasan

Through her eyes, he finds Los Angeles…

Nepal

*Sisterhood in Hollywood*

Director: Rajeela Shrestha

In the city of Hollywood, the dream of filmmaking bonds a sisterhood.

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).

ABOUT THE BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs’ (ECA) mission is to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries by means of educational and cultural exchange that assist in the development of peaceful relations. The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) builds relations between the people of the United States and the people of other countries through academic, cultural, sports, professional, and private exchanges, as well as public-private partnerships and mentoring programs. These exchange programs improve foreign relations and strengthen the national security of the United States, support U.S. international leadership, and provide a broad range of domestic benefits by helping break down barriers that often divide us. ECA programs build connections that engage and empower people and motivate them to become leaders and thinkers, to develop new skills, and to find connections that will create positive change in their communities. For more information, please visit [https://exchanges.state.gov/us](https://exchanges.state.gov/us).

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