



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WOMEN IN FILM, LOS ANGELES ANNOUNCES INSIGHT FELLOWS FOR 2020  
THE PROGRAM SUPPORTS WOMEN OF COLOR FILMMAKERS**

March 3, 2020, Los Angeles — Women In Film, Los Angeles (WIF LA) today announced the eighteen participants selected for their **2020 INSIGHT Program**.

There is urgency in our industry to address professional challenges faced by those with intersectional identities, and the extreme underrepresentation of women of color across the sector. WIF is committed to solutions toward making these shifts. “Genuine representation for women of color in entertainment will be determined not only by our visibility, but also our agency and our community. It is about more than being decided upon for a job, we must also be making these decisions and supporting one another to do so,” says **Maikiko James**, WIF Director of Programs.

INSIGHT is a community of talented, emerging women of color media creators. It provides assistance through a strong network of advocates, mentorship, and continuing education. Fellows receive support and resources from Women In Film to help them elevate their careers in a collective and nurturing way, including guiding and sharing knowledge with one another. The program incorporates open dialogue sessions, collaboration with fellow participants, and opportunities to develop custom programming. In addition to benefiting from the broader scope of Women In Film membership, fellows receive mentoring, bi-monthly master classes, and the opportunity to be featured on the Women In Film website. Master class topics range from creative producing to directing actors, and navigating distribution to financial sustainability. The 2020 mentors include **Fanshen Cox DiGiovanni**, Head of Strategic Outreach, Pearl Street Films; **Dana Gills**, Head, Development & Production for Wondaland Pictures; **Yasmin Hormozi**, Director, Narrative Film, Participant Media; **Emerlynn Lampitoc**, Director, Global Talent Development, NBCUni; **Margie Moreno**, Head of Latam Originals, YouTube Originals; and **Amber Rasberry**, VP Development, Paramount Players.

**The INSIGHT fellows are:**

**Angela Harvey**

Angela Harvey is an award-winning writer/producer for television, film, and multimedia. Her television credits include shows on MTV, CBS, ABC, and Marvel Television. She’s also served as Executive Producer on independent movies such as the recent hit Jinn and the soon-to-be-released Max and Me. Angela earned a Webby Award Honor for writing the trans media experience Teen Wolf: The Hunt and she’s currently writing the script for her feature film directorial debut.

**Angelique Molina**

Angelique is a Los Angeles based filmmaker. Inspired by visual storytelling, she is pursuing a career as a film and television Director and Cinematographer. She was the cinematographer on "Amelia's Closet," a short film that won the HBO best short award at the American Black Film Festival and was a finalist in the 43rd Student Academy awards. She also directed the Los Angeles Film Festival short "There goes the neighborhood."

### **Avril Z. Speaks**

Avril Speaks has experience as a producer, director, writer and educator. She produced Nijla Mumin's critically-acclaimed feature film Jinn, which won the Special Jury Prize for Writing at SXSW and was acquired for theatrical and VOD release. She is currently in production on the film African America, which will be her third film feature film as a producer. A former professor at Howard University and a contributing writer for DearProducer.com, Avril also has been a Producing Fellow in Sundance, Rotterdam, Cannes, IFP and Film Independent labs and networks, with several films in development.

### **Elizabeth Franco**

Elizabeth Franco was born in the Inland Empire and is the proud daughter of immigrants. She graduated from UCLA with a degree in Communication Studies and attended UCLA Law where she studied Critical Race Studies and Entertainment Law. While in school, she worked at the ACLU, NBCUniversal, and Escape Artists. Franco is currently a Manager of Program Development at CNN Original Series and previously worked at Vox Media Studios and WME. She is a 2019 Film Independent Project Involve Fellow and also writes and produces sketch comedy shows and shorts. Franco is particularly drawn to the creative process of crafting compelling stories with social, cultural and political significance, as well as working towards meaningful representation.

### **Gabriela Lugo**

Gabby Revilla Lugo is a Nicaraguan-American writer/director/producer who began her career as a Line Producer, giving her a great balance of creative and fiduciary awareness. Over the past few years she's shifted more to the creative side, graduating from the Fox Writer's Intensive program and placing in the top 10% of the Nicholls fellowship. She's worked with notable collaborators like Andy Samberg, Ted Melfi, Damien Chazelle, Robbie Brenner and many more. A history major, graduate of James Madison University she considers herself first and foremost, a student of storytelling and looks forward to telling stories of marginalized people around the globe. She's set to announce her feature directorial debut in the fall of 2019.

### **Gabrielle Ebron**

Gabrielle Ebron graduated with honors from the Film Studies program at Wesleyan University, where she won the Akiva Goldsman Prize in Screenwriting for her feature script, LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER. After moving to Los Angeles, she joined Homegrown Pictures as an assistant where she began to learn the ropes from seasoned producer Stephanie Allain. With an eye for authentic stories, she was promoted within the year to Creative Executive, where she is charged with finding young voices and developing current projects. She helped bring in Homegrown's first Asian American project, and her first TV show, "Plainview," is on the fast track to production.

### **Jeannie Nguyen**

Jeannie Nguyen is a Vietnamese-American writer/director born and raised in San Jose, currently residing in Los Angeles. Her unconventional, self-taught approach to filmmaking — inspired by her hyphenated upbringing — plunges deep into social issues of minorities and stirs up surreal, dream-like narratives. Daughter of refugees, she strives to be the voice of the underrepresented in order to shed light on those who are otherwise deemed invisible.

### **Jessica Shields**

Jessica D. Shields is an award-winning writer and director, originally from Atlanta, Georgia. Shields is a participant in the AFI Directing Workshop for Women Class of 2021. She was selected for the HBO Access Writing Fellowship and is the recipient of the 2019 HUMANITAS Prize Drama Fellowship. Her forthcoming directorial project, RENÉ & JAZ, is supported by the Women in Film Production Program, where she is a Directing Fellow. Shields holds an M.F.A. in Screenwriting & Directing from Columbia University and is an alumna of Vanderbilt University.

### **Kase Pena**

An award-winning filmmaker, Kase was born in New York City. She's a Transgender Latinx Woman, the offspring of working-class parents from the Dominican Republic, and she's fully fluent in Spanish. She's the first Trans Latinx Woman to get hired as a Staff Writer on a scripted TV show and she is also the first Trans Latinx Female to join the Writers Guild of America. Kase has been the recipient of some of the most prestigious Fellowships in the industry, including The Sundance Institute Launch Grant; The Latino Lens Narrative Shorts Incubator; Film Independent Project Involve; The Ryan Murphy Half Initiative and the Outfest Screenwriting Lab.

### **Krenée Tolson**

Krenée A. Tolson was born and raised in Baltimore, MD where she discovered her love for acting. She began training at the age of 13 with the Baltimore School for the Art Twigs program and at 14 was accepted into the school as a high school student where she continued to study theatre. In 2008, she was accepted in DePaul University's Theatre School, in Chicago, IL. As a professional actress credits include Chicago PD, For the Cause directed by Katherine Nero, and tons of theatre in Chicago, Baltimore, and DC. She made her directorial debut in early 2018 in The First to Fight, a short film illuminating the issues of U.S. Veterans returning from combat and dealing with PTSD. Krenée starred opposite Jeremy Tardy in her Writing/Producing debut film Finding Phoebe. The film received The John Hopkins Saul Zaentz Innovation Grant and is currently in the festival circuit.

### **Kryzz Gautier**

Kryzz Gautier is a queer, Afro-Latina writer/director born and raised in the Dominican Republic. Kryzz has been selected as a participant in multiple programs and fellowships including Ryan Murphy's "Half Initiative" for emerging episodic directors, Women In Film's "INSIGHT", and the DGA's "Commercial Director's Diversity Program". Kryzz has also been invited to take part in Women In Film's mentorship program where she is currently being mentored by writer/director and "Queen Sugar" showrunner Kat Candler. Some other accolades include being named as an "Emerging Content Creator" by The National Association Of Latino Independent Producers (NALIP) and being recognized with Superlounge's "Diversity Award for Directors" curated by acclaimed director Jordan Brady.

### **Lauren E. Zubia Calsada**

"I am a filmmaker born and raised in L.A. My story begins with my family. I come from love, from strong women, from multi-generational homes. I come from spicy food and communal kitchens. In the past five years, my artistic practice has evolved just like my family. I have experience in documentary and experimental video about healing through music, poetry, and movement. Last year, I was granted the opportunity that upstarted my career. I co-directed a docuseries about a queer chosen family who dance vogue in Mexico City, called "House of Mamis." The series was later awarded by GLAAD for its pioneering approach to storytelling. Now, I am interested in broadening my content to show the scope of my extended queer Latinx chosen family and identity."

### **Mariscela Beatriz Méndez**

Mariscela Beatriz Méndez is a Cinematographer and has shot numerous forms of media for Slamdance, Google, Condé Nast Entertainment and TVOne. Mariscela is based in Los Angeles, but works throughout the United States.

### **Martina Lee**

Martina Lee is a writer/director who decided to pursue her passion for film in 2013 by attending New York University's Tisch Asia in Singapore. It was there that she began her journey to find her artistic voice. IN 2015 she moved to Los Angeles to attend the University of Southern California. While developing her craft at USC, she was awarded the prestigious Annenberg Fellowship in 2016, and again in 2017. Her award-winning film BLUEBERRY, starring Evan Alec from Jordan Peele's US made it into a number of film festivals, including the American Black Film Festival and Blackstar Film Festival. BLUEBERRY also aired on both Aspire TV and on SHOT TV in Russia. After school, she was a creative coordinator for White Horse Pictures, and worked on THE APOLLO, directed by Roger Ross Williams, and PAVAROTTI, directed by Ron Howard. She was accepted as a directing fellow for the 2019 Project Involve Film Independent where she developed her next short, BLACK BOY JOY, starring William Catlett (from "Love is..." and "Black Lightning") and Evan Alex. She is currently working as a post-production coordinator for a new TV show airing this fall on CBS, developing her own personal projects.

### **Meeakshi Ramamurthy**

Ramamurthy is a comedy writer/director from South Texas—that means she's one of the few Indian people who can tell you where to get a good taco. She is a graduate of University of Texas' film program and of USC's M.F.A. Production program. Currently, Ramamurthy is a writer on a Netflix animated series from creator Sanjau Patel, and she is in competition with Color Creative and Powderkeg to write her teen musical movie BROWNTOWN. Ramamurthy is also the creator of the acclaimed South Asian web series "The FOB and I."

### **Shandrea Evans**

Shandrea Evans is an actor-filmmaker whose storytelling is deeply seasoned with her Southern roots. Born and raised in Augusta, GA, she began writing, directing and acting in plays and films at her fine arts school. With both parents being one of 7 children, she had a gamut of odd humans to use as character study. Shandrea uses her unique point of view to intentionally explore the nuances, beauty, and fierce spirit of marginalized groups, particularly black women. With a cynically optimistic voice, Shandrea's method of choice is quirky dramedy. Recently, she was a shadowing director on Season 4 of HBO's Insecure, where she had a month long apprenticeship with showrunner/director Prentice Penny. Currently, Shandrea is in post production on "Prepared," a short romantic comedy about a woman whose dating struggles lead her to "fail up" to self-acceptance. She also just wrapped on a commercial for Issa Rae's music company Raedio, which she produced and acted in. Her body of work includes her web series UNDECIDED, short films, and an original pilot. On Sundays, you can find her in class at UCB or lining up at a trendy ice cream shop.

### **Sue-Ellen Chitunya**

"I am a Georgia State University and UCLA's Producing Certification graduate. Growing up in Zimbabwe, I was always intrigued by moving pictures. This piqued my interest in pursuing a filmmaking career. I am highly interested in filmmaking for the following reasons: telling stories, entertaining, and learning. I constantly seek ways to enhance my knowledge about filmmaking; this led me to being awarded the 2016 Roger and Chaz Ebert Foundation Fellowship. I'm committed to telling stories from all walks of life that encourage conversations around topics that society doesn't discuss openly, and also create content that purely entertains. I feel I am at a crossroads in my career. Participating in WIF INSIGHT offers the perfect program with the enablers that I need to push forward in my endeavors as I pursue my career goals. I'm particularly drawn to the mentoring aspect. I would like to have a better understanding of why we face certain challenges, and learn nuanced skills of navigating the industry as a foreign black woman."

### **Winnie Kemp**

Winnie Kemp is an independent producer who most recently ran tv development at Super Deluxe. During her time there, she developed and executive produced THIS CLOSE (Season 2 comes out SundanceTV in September), a groundbreaking dramedy series that was nominated for Best Comedy Series by the GLAAD Media Awards, nominated for a Peabody Award and won the PGA George Suga Award, and CHAMBERS for Netflix, the first tv show from a major network to have a Native American starring in a lead role. Prior to joining Super Deluxe in 2015, she worked in independent film finance at CAA and in development at CBS Films.

### **About Women In Film, Los Angeles**

Women In Film, Los Angeles (WIF LA) advocates for and advances the careers of women working in the screen industries—to achieve parity and transform culture. Founded in 1973, Women In Film supports all women working in film, television, and digital media from emerging to advanced career. Our distinguished programs include: mentoring, speaker and screening series, production training program, writing labs, film finishing funds, legal aid, and an annual financing intensive. Women In Film advocates for gender parity through research, education, and media campaigns. Women In Film honors the achievements of women in Hollywood through the Legacy Series, annual Emmy and Oscar parties, and our signature event, the Women In Film Annual Gala. Membership is open to all media professionals and more information can be found on our website: [wif.org](http://wif.org). Follow Women In Film on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).

### **Women In Film Contact**

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