



DOC NYC ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL LIST OF DOCUMENTARY NEW LEADERS

NEW YORK, November 16, 2020 - DOC NYC, America's largest documentary festival, announced its inaugural list of Documentary New Leaders, a new initiative to honor individuals whose efforts and fresh thinking on distribution, sales, festivals, and marketing bring greater inclusion and equity to the field. The initiative is co-presented by A&E.

"We were blown away by the response to our call for nominees for this program," said DOC NYC Director of Industry & Education Caitlin Boyle. "Our initial hope was to recognize 10 new leaders this year, but ultimately we expanded to 16 to create a cohort of honorees who reflect the full breadth and depth of rising talent in our field."

"I'm thrilled to see the inspiring work of these individuals be recognized and hope this program can help them extend their reach even further," said the festival's Director of Filmmaker Development Opal H. Bennett.

The selection process began with an open call for submissions. Nearly 100 candidates were reviewed by a six-person selection committee of Boyle, Bennett, IFC Center's Operations Manager Asha Phelps, DOC NYC's Executive Director Raphaela Neihausen, Artistic Director Thom Powers, and Director of Programming Basil Tsiokos. Over the next year, the New Leaders program will host monthly gatherings for the honorees, offering a forum for mentorship, camaraderie, collaboration, and organizing.

The list of 16 recipients draws from eight U.S. cities and covers a wide range of experience, from grassroots organizing to non-profit grantmaking to international distribution and beyond. While several honorees are filmmakers, this program highlights their leadership in roles that shape industry practices and culture. (One honoree, Loira Limbal, selected for her work at Firelight Media, is also the director of *Through the Night*, playing in DOC NYC's Viewfinders competition as part of this year's festival.)

The Documentary New Leaders list is the latest program under the DOC NYC PRO portfolio of initiatives. DOC NYC PRO also includes the annual 40 Under 40 list recognizing young creative talent; the Only In New York networking sessions for documentary works-in-progress; and DOC NYC's lineup of professional development classes and panels, which pivoted in 2020 from an 8-day annual conference format to a suite of online events serving thousands of filmmakers across the U.S. and worldwide.

The 2020 DOC NYC Documentary New Leaders are:

Brenda Avila-Hanna, Equity & Representation Team Lead, New Day Films
Santa Cruz, CA

For strengthening collaborative and sustainable film distribution spaces and practices for historically underrepresented artists and audiences.

Caty Borum Chattoo, Executive Director, Center for Media and Social Impact, American University School of Communication
Washington, D.C.

For fostering awareness and advocacy about documentary's role in social change and democracy through research, convenings, and creative collaboration.

Iyabo Boyd, Founder, Brown Girls Doc Mafia
New York, NY

For fighting inequality in the film industry by advocating for BIPOC women and non-binary documentary professionals.

Robert Chang, Coordinating Producer, America ReFramed
New York, NY

For presenting to the public diverse and consequential documentaries to illuminate complex social issues.

Abby Lynn Kang Davis, Founder, character
Chicago, IL

For advocating for underrepresented storytellers and creating space for voices that will go unheard if not fought for.

Chloe Gbai, Director, IF/Then Shorts, Field of Vision
Queens, NY

For creating economic and creative pathways for short-form documentary filmmakers to work and thrive.

Cheryl Green, Digital Operations Lead, New Day Films
Portland, OR

For advancing deaf and disability access for equity in documentary filmmaking and viewing.

Set Hernandez Rongkilyo, Co-Founder, Undocumented Filmmakers Collective
San Fernando Valley, CA

For centering the expertise of undocumented immigrants not just as sources of stories, but as filmmakers, artists, and primary audiences.

Marjon Javadi, Director, Original Documentaries & Docuseries, Disney+

Los Angeles, CA

For empowering storytellers to find their voices by using documentary as a tool to reach new audiences.

Zana Lawrence, Director, Documentary Features, Netflix

Los Angeles, CA

For increasing empathy on a global scale through the power of documentary storytelling.

Loira Limbal, SVP of Programming, Firelight Media

Bronx, NY

For nurturing BIPOC storytellers and working towards a more just and beautiful documentary ecosystem.

Marangeli Mejia-Rabell, Festival Director, Philadelphia Latino Film Festival

Philadelphia, PA

For bridging Latinx creators, stories, and culture to bring about positive change, new representation, and self-actualization.

Ani Mercedes, CEO & Impact Producer, Looky Looky Pictures

Miami, FL

For empowering filmmakers to activate their film's most passionate audience through powerful partnership building, engaging events, and impactful social change campaigns.

Denae Peters, Program Officer, Perspective Fund

New York, NY

For funding initiatives that amplify movement-driven modes of distribution and foster an inclusive and sustainable ecosystem for documentary filmmakers and impact strategists.

Merrill Sterritt, Head of Alliances and Cultural Engagement, Cinereach

Brooklyn, NY

For advocating for increased funding and accessibility for under-resourced and marginalized filmmaking communities.

Nicole Tsien, Co-Producer, American Documentary / POV

Queens, NY

For building an equitable framework for POV programming and developing new pipelines for diverse filmmakers.

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DOC NYC is produced and presented by IFC Center, a division of AMC Networks.

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About DOC NYC

DOC NYC, America's largest documentary festival, is held annually in November; the 11th edition takes place online November 11-19, 2020, presenting more than 200 films to audiences across the US. In addition to premiering feature-length and short documentaries, the festival's highlights also include DOC NYC PRO—a series of in-depth panels and case studies—and the Visionaries Tribute awards ceremony that honors major figures in the field of nonfiction film. DOC NYC is produced and presented by IFC Center, a division of AMC Networks.