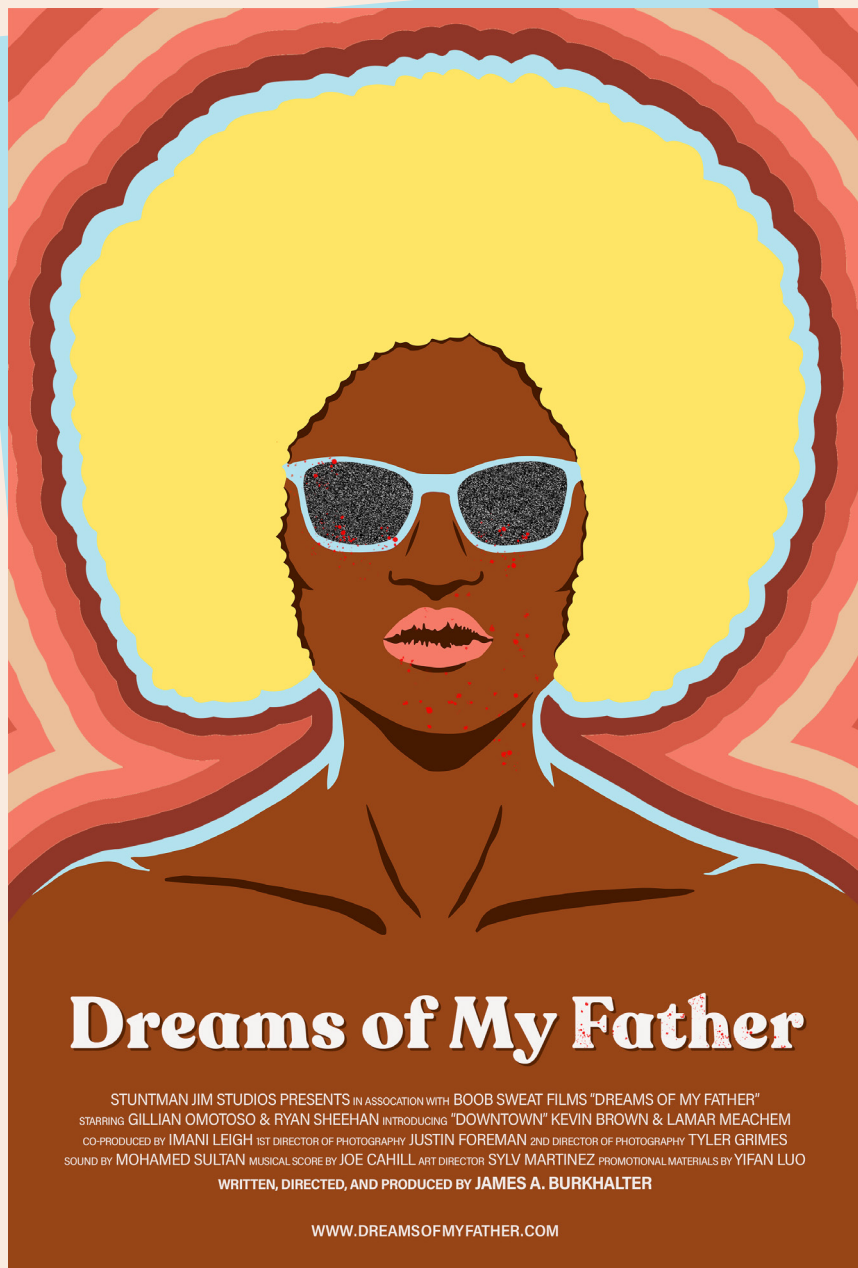


A FILM BY JAMES A. BURKHALTER

Dreams of My Father





STUNTMAN JIM STUDIOS PRESENTS
IN ASSOCIATION WITH BOOB SWEAT FILMS

Dreams of My Father

RUNNING TIME..... 14 minutes, 15 seconds (14:15)

STARRING..... Gillian Omotoso & Ryan Sheehan

INTRODUCING..... "Downtown" Kevin Brown & Lamar Meachem

CO-PRODUCED by..... Imani Leigh

1st DIRECTOR of PHOTOGRAPHY Justin Foreman

2nd DIRECTOR of PHOTOGRAPHY Tyler Grimes

SOUND MIXING by Mohamed Sultan

MUSICAL SCORE by Joe Cahill

ART DIRECTOR Sylv Martinez

PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS by Yifan Luo

WRITTEN, DIRECTED, and PRODUCED by James A. Burkhalter

Dreams of My Father

STUNTMAN JIM STUDIOS PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BOOB SWEAT FILMS "DREAMS OF MY FATHER"
STARRING GILLIAN OMOTOSO & RYAN SHEEHAN INTRODUCING "DOWNTOWN" KEVIN BROWN & LAMAR MEACHEM
CO-PRODUCED BY IMANI LEIGH 1ST DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY JUSTIN FOREMAN 2ND DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY TYLER GRIMES
SOUND BY MOHAMED SULTAN MUSICAL SCORE BY JOE CAHILL ART DIRECTOR SYLV MARTINEZ PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS BY YIFAN LUO
WRITTEN, DIRECTED, AND PRODUCED BY JAMES A. BURKHALTER

WWW.DREAMSOFMYFATHER.COM

PROD. Dreams Of My Father

ROLL	SCENE	TAKE
7	6A	1

DIRECTOR: James A. Burkhalter

CAMERA: T. Grimes, J. Foreman

tagline

She's sitting on a secret.
Her monster's in the mirror.

logline

A transwoman's chance at love is jeopardized by the looming spectre of her abusive father.



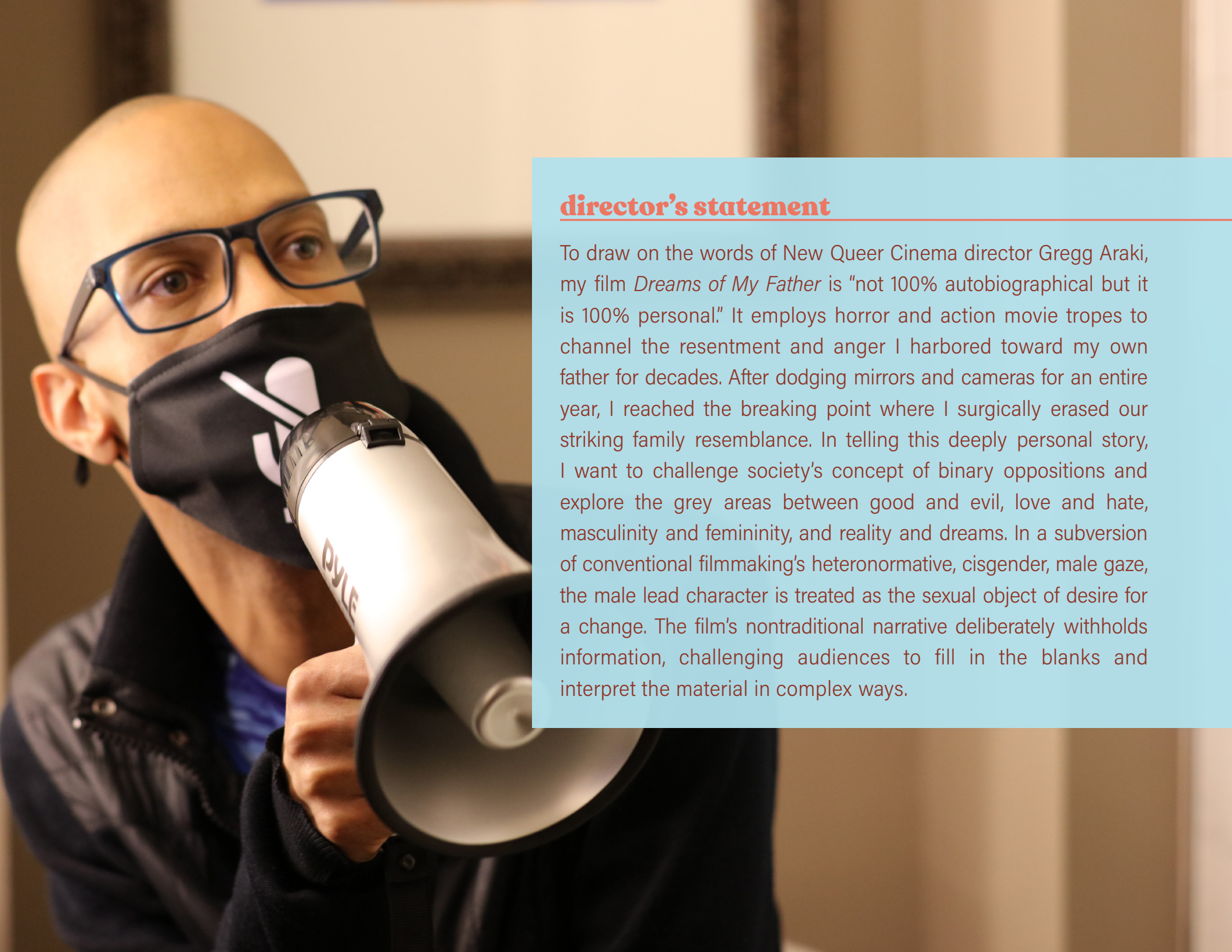
short synopsis

En route to an audition, aspiring actress Leila stops at a motel and hooks up with one of the locals. She is flooded with paranoia and insecurity after consuming a weed edible about her physical appearance as a transwoman. To make matters worse, everywhere she turns she sees the apparition of her biggest tormentor: her abusive father. Will she summon the courage to vanquish the demons of her past once and for all?

director's biography

JAMES A. BURKHALTER is a filmmaker, screenwriter, and educator living and working in Baltimore. His films have been honored at the Made In Baltimore Short Film Festival, the Black Femme Supremacy Film Festival, and the LGBTQ Unbordered International Film Festival, among others. His filmmaking idols include John Waters, Bill Gunn, Jordan Peele, Gregg Araki, Pedro Almodóvar, and Cheryl Dunye. James holds a dual BA in Documentary Film Studies and English from Gettysburg College and earned his MFA in Filmmaking from the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2021.





director's statement

To draw on the words of New Queer Cinema director Gregg Araki, my film *Dreams of My Father* is "not 100% autobiographical but it is 100% personal." It employs horror and action movie tropes to channel the resentment and anger I harbored toward my own father for decades. After dodging mirrors and cameras for an entire year, I reached the breaking point where I surgically erased our striking family resemblance. In telling this deeply personal story, I want to challenge society's concept of binary oppositions and explore the grey areas between good and evil, love and hate, masculinity and femininity, and reality and dreams. In a subversion of conventional filmmaking's heteronormative, cisgender, male gaze, the male lead character is treated as the sexual object of desire for a change. The film's nontraditional narrative deliberately withholds information, challenging audiences to fill in the blanks and interpret the material in complex ways.

inclusivity statement

Going into this project, I drew a hard line: I was committed to casting a transwoman in the trans lead role. As a gay male viewer, I've always been frustrated with the gay-for-pay phenomenon, in which straight actors are cast in roles written for queer people. More often than not, films made about us are not made for our enjoyment. And that needs to change. That's why I'm a filmmaker today. I want to spread a message of inclusivity to future generations. If the success of trans-inclusive productions such as *Tangerine* and *Pose* are any indication, audiences respond favorably to authenticity and vulnerability.





intended audience statement

Lovingly created for the Queer community, first and foremost, this film centers on the universal fear of becoming one's parents. Coming out to family, while more accepted today, is not far removed from a time when it meant saying goodbye to loved ones forever, which Leila, the story's protagonist, has had to do out of self-preservation. Intentionally written for a black transgender woman—the planet's most vulnerable and targeted group—she is a character Queer and BIPOC viewers will enjoy seeing themselves in and whose struggle even cisgender viewers will be able to empathize with. Leila's strength and defiance in the face of adversity will hopefully empower survivors of physical and psychological abuse.

artistic lineage

Dreams of My Father follows in a lineage of films that challenge reality and society as we know it: from the female action heroes of the 1970s Blaxploitation era to the unapologetically queer filmmakers transforming today's Hollywood landscape. Since early childhood, I've always gravitated toward stories about outcasts. Despite having his early films relegated to porn theaters, iconic Baltimore filmmaker John Waters is now celebrated as "the King of Filth" for telling outrageously fun and authentic queer stories without sanitizing the content for mainstream heteronormative audiences. I also greatly admire Gregg Araki's ability to maintain his punk rock aesthetic while telling a heartbreaking story of childhood sexual abuse with remarkable sensitivity in *Mysterious Skin*. Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman* not only broke down barriers to tell authentic black female stories, but the film itself frequently breaks the fourth wall and playfully blurs the boundary between fact and fiction. *Dreams of My Father* is the latest in a long legacy of films that raise awareness and provide queer and BIPOC viewers the opportunity to see themselves on film:

- ***Belle de Jour***, dir. Luis Buñuel, France, 1967
- ***Candyman***, dir. Bernard Rose, USA, 1992
- ***Chasing Amy***, dir. Kevin Smith, USA, 1995
- ***Cleopatra Jones***, dir. Jack Starrett, USA, 1973
- ***Death Proof***, dir. Quentin Tarantino, USA, 2007
- ***Disclosure***, dir. Sam Feder, USA, 2020
- ***Drop Dead Fred***, dir. Ate de Jong, USA, 1991
- ***Enter the Void***, dir. Gaspar Noé, France, 2009
- ***Ethan Mao***, dir. Quentin Lee, USA, 2004
- ***Eve's Bayou***, dir. Kasi Lemmons, USA, 1997
- ***Eyes Of Laura Mars***, dir. Irvin Kershner, USA, 1978
- ***The Eyes Of My Mother***, dir. Nicolas Pesce, USA, 2016
- ***Foxy Brown***, dir. Jack Hill, USA, 1974
- ***Funeral Parade of Roses***, dir. Toshio Matsumoto, Japan, 1969
- ***Gothika***, dir. Mathieu Kassovitz, USA, 2003
- ***Hereditary***, dir. Ari Aster, USA, 2018
- ***Kill Bill***, dir. Quentin Tarantino, USA, 2003
- ***The Living End***, dir. Gregg Araki, USA, 1992
- ***Martyrs***, dir. Pascal Laugier, France, 2008
- ***Morrer Como Um Homem (To Die Like A Man)***, dir. João Pedro Rodrigues, Portugal, 2009
- ***Mysterious Skin***, dir. Gregg Araki, USA, 2004
- ***Nightingale***, dir. Elliott Lester, USA, 2014
- ***Persona***, dir. Ingmar Bergman, Sweden, 1966
- ***Poison***, dir. Todd Haynes, USA, 1991
- ***Psycho***, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, USA 1960
- ***Stay Tuned***, dir. Peter Hyams, USA, 1992
- ***Tangerine***, dir. Sean Baker, USA, 2015
- ***Todo Sobre Mi Madre (All About My Mother)***, dir. Pedro Almodóvar, Spain/France, 1999
- ***The Watermelon Woman***, dir. Cheryl Dunye, USA, 1996



cast biographies



Gillian Omotoso // “Leila”

Gillian is a New Jersey-based actress, poet, songwriter, and musician. Although this is her first film credit, she starred in Brandi Carlile’s music video for “The Joke” and has a video project coming out this spring from director-editors Fay Davies & Solena Rodriguez.

Gillian’s musical influences include David Bowie, Madonna, Prince, Kate Bush, Queen, and Nina Simone, among others. Her favorite TV shows are *Euphoria*, *Gossip Girl*, *My So-Called Life*, *Glee* (S1), and *Orange Is The New Black*. In her free time, she enjoys caterwauling, writing, and watching videos on politics, the voice, and celebrity.

IG: @shyextroversion

Ryan Sheehan // “Butch”

Ryan is a seasoned Brooklyn-based actor, writer, director, and musician. He is also a video game streamer on the Twitch.tv platform. Ryan has also appeared in several short films including *The Stand* (2018) and *Yesterday* (2017).

Ryan’s favorite TV shows are *True Detective* (S1) and *The Office*, and his favorite films are *Manchester by the Sea* and *The Dark Knight*.

IG: @tallboy_96



“Downtown” Kevin Brown // “Father”

Kevin earned his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Baltimore and he currently owns and operates the NANCY cafe in Station North with his husband, Bill. He is the founder of the James Baldwin Literary Society, a former member of the Association of Black Media Workers, and a current member of the Pink Pistols (a LGBT-friendly firearms training group). A former reporter for the *Baltimore Sun*, Kevin has received multiple writing awards throughout his career.

This actually isn't his first time appearing on-camera as he recently shot a webseries entitled *Charm City* and he briefly appeared in John Waters' 1990 film, *Crybaby*. In his spare time, Kevin enjoys cooking, playwriting, and listening to Gladys Knight and Lil Uzi. His favorite films include *Set It Off*, *Claudine*, *The Landlord*, *The Godfather*, and *Scarface*.

IG: @stationnortharts



Lamar Meachem // “Lionel”

Despite this being Lamar's very first acting gig, he was a pleasure to have on-set and his positive energy kept everybody excited after a grueling first day of shooting. He is an A-student at a Baltimore City public school and his hobbies include football and ROBLOX video games.





Shireen Robinson // “Mother”

Shireen earned her Master's Degree in Education from Howard University. She is currently a school principal and member of the Queens Sisterhood Society. In her free time, she enjoys floral design, listening to Outkast, and reading books by favorite authors Octavia Butler and Toni Morrison.

IG: @shishiblooms

Ava Dee // “Sister”

Ava Dee is the director's niece, frequent collaborator, and personal pride and joy. #guncle Her hobbies include volleyball, cheerleading, baking, chemistry, and video game design. She was also the Makeup Artist for her middle school's production of *Frozen: The Musical*. Ava currently aspires to be an accountant, like her father, but we're hoping that it's just a phase.





crew biographies



Imani Leigh // Co-Producer

Imani earned dual Bachelor's degrees from the University of Maryland-College Park and her MFA in Filmmaking from MICA. Imani is a filmmaker, producer, and founding member of the female owned-and-operated film production company, Boob Sweat Films. Her short film *We Be The Same* (2019) was an official selection at the Black Femme Supremacy Film Festival.

Imani's biggest artistic influences are Yvette Lee Bowser, Barry Jenkins, Peter Greenaway, and Shirin Neshat, among others. Her hobbies include reading, writing, hiking, yoga, photography, oil painting, and woodworking.

IG: @fritoleigh / @boobsweatfilms

Justin Foreman // 1st Director of Photography

Justin earned his Bachelor's Degree from St. Mary's College of Maryland and MFA from MICA's Filmmaking program in 2021. He is a filmmaker and DP-for-Hire serving the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area.

His short experimental 16mm film, *Pixel Pulp* was an Official Selection at the 2020 Made In Baltimore Short Film Festival. His short documentary, *Time & Temperature*, is about an aging maestro fighting to keep the Venetian tradition of glass blowing alive through two young apprentices.

A big fan of documentaries, Justin's favorites include *Koyaanisqatsi* and *Our Daily Bread*. His biggest artistic influences are Maya Deren, Bruce Connor, Kenneth Anger, and Stan Brakhage, among many others. In his spare time, he enjoys cooking, photography, and searching for the best cup of coffee.

IG: @justinforemanphotos



Tyler Grimes // 2nd Director of Photography

Tyler is a photographer and filmmaker who earned his Bachelor's Degree in Mass/Visual Communications from York College of Pennsylvania and his MFA from MICA's Photographic & Electronic Media program in 2021. His favorite video artists include Nam June Paik, Timur Si-Oin, Bruce Nauman, and Peter Campus. He is also a music lover and enjoys listening to animals as leaders, LITE, CHON, Sun Ra, and Herbie Hancock, among many others. In his free time, Tyler enjoys yoga, biking, hiking, and studying philosophy. Tyler is releasing a photo book—be sure to pick it up at Grimeography.com!

IG: @grimeography



Andrea Tercero // Assistant Camera Operator, Gaffer/Slate

Andrea earned her Bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland College Park. In addition to working in NYC, she is a freelance photographer and videographer. In her spare time, Andrea enjoys drawing, interior design, and learning new languages. Her favorite TV shows are *Luther* and *Law & Order SVU*. Her favorite author is Roald Dahl and her favorite film director is Alfonso Cuarón.

website: www.AndreaTercero.com



Mohamed Sultan // Sound

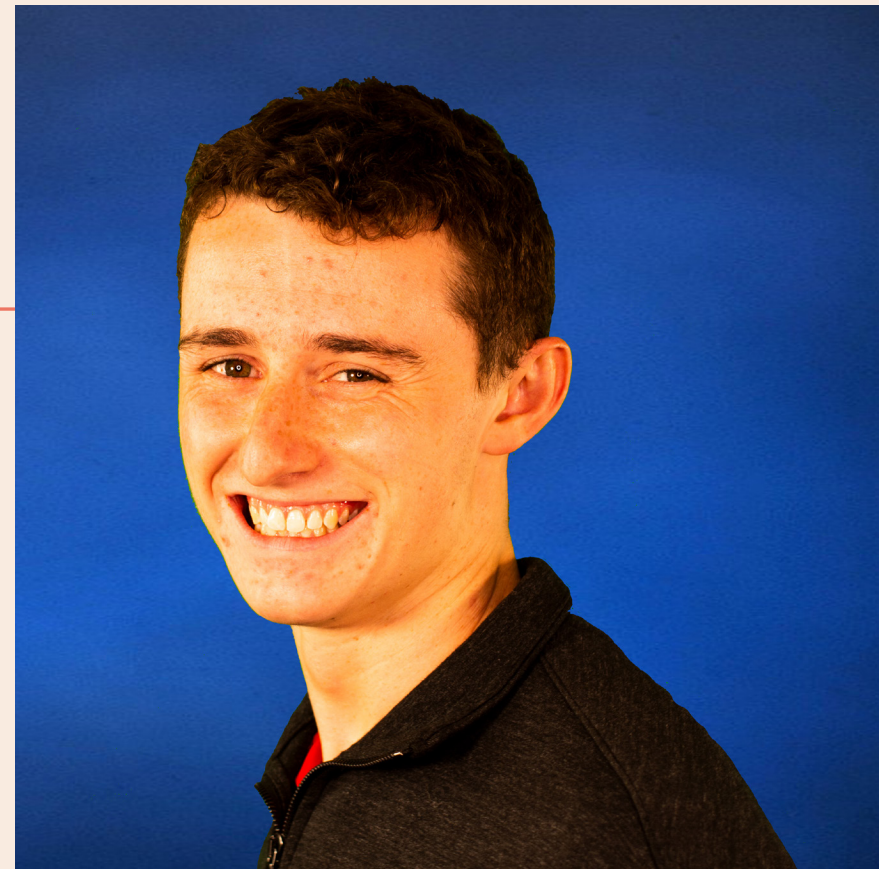
Mohamed is a Bahraini filmmaker who graduated from MICA's Filmmaking MFA program in 2021. His short film, *Rug*, is a psychological thriller about a mysterious rug that threatens to tear a superstitious family apart. Moe has assisted on several other productions, including *The Veil Between* (2nd AC, 2020), *FLICK* (DP, 2020), and *Window* (1st AD, 2019). His biggest artistic influences include Michael Haneke, Werner Herzog, Shōhei Imamura, Naguib Mahfouz, Ingmar Bergman, Aldous Huxley, and James Joyce, among others.

IG: @moe.sultanz

Joe Cahill // Composer

Joe is a composer living & working in the Baltimore area. He was voted "Most Valuable Musician" at his alma mater. In addition to this film, Joe's music will be featured in two other short films from the MICA MFA showcase, *FLICK* and *The Purgatory of Ghosts and Grief* (both directed by Dem Lashawn Keilu). In his free time, he enjoys surfing. Joe's favorite films are *The Grand Budapest Hotel* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and his biggest artistic influences are Kendrick Lamar and Anderson Paak.

website: <https://rcrft.co/reel/Jcahil247/composer>



Sylv Martinez // Art Director

Sylv graduated from MICA's Interdisciplinary Arts MFA program in 2021. Her interests include yoga, meditation, plants, and experimental music/sound. Her biggest artistic influences are 100 gecs, Eva Hesse, Ana Kras, and Sandra Cisneros. Sylv created pieces specifically for the film (with removable parts, no less) that comment on the mental health stigma.

website: www.SylvLitz.com

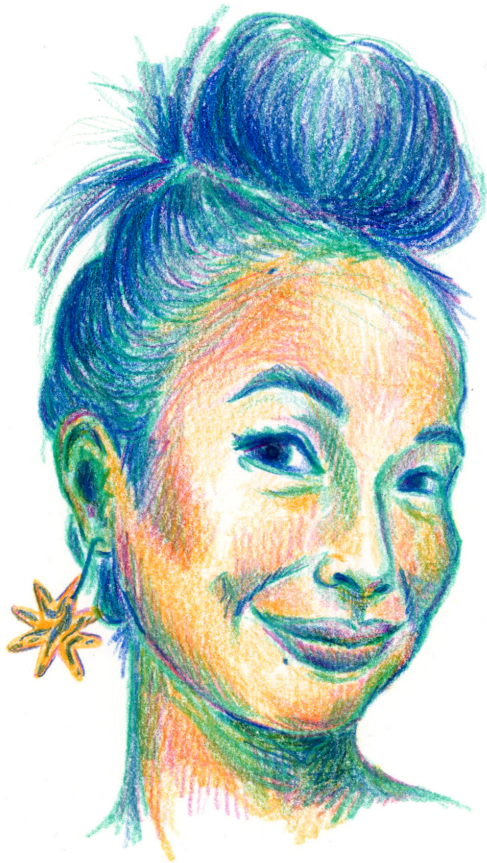


Yifan Luo // Marketing

Yifan earned her Bachelor's degree from Brown University and her MFA in Illustration Practice from MICA in 2021. She designed the film's official poster, promotional materials, and the electronic press kit (EPK). She is also a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) and earned MICA's ICON11 Young Professional Award in 2020.

Her focuses include visual journalism/portraiture, editorial, food illustration, and children's markets. She is interested in projects that explore current events, intersectional environmentalism, and multiculturalism. Her art is heavily inspired by pop culture and everyday moments, from the mundane to the monumental.

IG: [@yifanluoart](https://www.instagram.com/yifanluoart) // website: www.YifanLuo.com





Terra Blissett // Documentarian

Terra earned her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Maryland-College Park and her MFA from MICA's Photographic & Electronic Media program in 2021. Her current thesis project centers around the creation of UX tools that would mitigate the effects of human conflict or pain. Terra is also developing a zine that includes an interview & photospread with director James A. Burkhalter.

Her biggest artistic influence is photojournalist Tim Hetherington and her favorite film is *Beasts of a Southern Wild* (2012).

IG: @terraamberlee

Rebecca Marimutu // Documentarian

Rebecca is a photographer, educator, and entrepreneur working in the Baltimore metropolitan area. She graduated from MICA's Photographic and Electronic Media MFA program in 2020. Her publishing company, Anchovy Press, was recently awarded a startup funding grant at MICA's 2021 UP/START competition! Anchovy Press creates fun, authentic, future-focused children's books that center on Black and Brown experiences. Rebecca's current guilty pleasure is the CW's *Supernatural*.

IG: @rebeccamarimutu / @anchovy_press



Alex Paul Henderson // Publicity Photographer

Alex graduated from MICA's Photographic and Electronic Media MFA program in 2020. For his thesis capstone, he developed an interactive exploration of how social media platforms censor disenfranchised groups, specifically (queer) people of color. The project featured his frequent collaborator and assistant photographer, local drag queen Kelsey Kadaver (Zach Dotson). Alex's biggest artistic influences include Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, Ken Russell, Dario Argento, and all of Prince's protégés.

IG: @alexfilmguy



Christine Fils Aime // Hair & Makeup

Christine Fils Aime is a licensed cosmetologist and entrepreneur working in the tri-state area. Her biggest joy in life is making other people happy. Her favorite movies are *Set It Off* and anything by Tyler Perry.

IG: @krissykazmo



website: www.DreamsOfMyFather.com // IG: @ShelsComing.AFamilyFilm // email: JBurkhalter@mica.edu

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