

**Counteracting Extractive Storytelling
in the South and in Global communities of color
with Indie Media Arts South**

“Listen to the people and the community and the work that you are trying to help with instead of going in with your own preconceived notions about what needs to be done and what needs to be funded.” - **Audria Byrd Filmmaker & cultural organizer // Freedom Maps Report by Ron Ragin and Maria Cherry Rangel**

Central Organizing Committee

Melanie Addington - Oxford Film Festival/Mississippi Film Alliance

Dan Brawley - Cucalorus Film Foundation

Chloe Cook - Sidewalk Film Center + Cinema

Teresa Hollingsworth - Southern Circuit Tour/South Arts

Elaine McMillion Sheldon - Award-Winning Documentary Filmmaker

Tommy Nichols - Charlotte Black Film Festival & Collective

Karen Noble - IMAS Administrator

Melissa Simpson - Film Impact Georgia

Amada Torruella - Independent Filmmaker + Film Curator

Chloe Walters Wallace - Firelight Media

If you are interested in joining Indie Media Arts South or have any queries please email IMAS Administrator Karen Noble at imartssouth@gmail.com

What is Indie Media Arts South?

Born from a national Independent Media Arts collective created by Sundance Institute and the National Endowment for the Arts, Indie Media Arts South is a regional organization working to support and uplift filmmakers and arts organizations across the greater south. For more visit: <https://www.imasouth.org/>

Ongoing Working Groups

Working Group #1: Work toward a [collaborative database](#) of digital learning opportunities and grants for filmmakers

Working Group #2: Advocate [for grantors and national incubators to operate more inclusively.](#) To educate and [push against extractive storytelling](#) in our region

Working Group #3: [Improve data specific to the south](#), both for organizations and filmmakers

Working Group #4: [Create opportunities for Southern filmmakers](#), grow audiences, and [amplify Southern programming](#) while growing the volume and quality of southern work.

IMAS Member Interest Form: <https://airtable.com/shrjFHiRdKrOyUS41>

IMAS Getting Real Session 2020 // Participant Bios

Ebony Blanding is a writer and filmmaker living and working in Atlanta, Georgia. whose work seeks to amplify black women, black people and humanity existing in fullness cinematically. Co-founder of the Atlanta-based film art house, *House of June*, Blanding has presented films at educational institutions including Spelman College, Emory University and John H. Hopkins University. House of June's work has also screened at Atlanta Film Society, Capetown International Film Festival, Indie Grits - Daughters: Celebrating Emerging Female Filmmakers of Color and Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport. Exploring themes ranging from the historical fight for civil rights to young girls coming-of-age to directing commercial productions, Blanding received the 2019 Idea Capital Atlanta Grant for her narrative *And so they rested*, paying homage to Southern motifs and black performance art and has recently been awarded a Southern Documentary Fund Development grant. Blanding uses moving pictures and narratives as ascensions to glorify black renaissance, and believes the complexities and possibilities of blackness portrayed on screen are an artistic act of activism.

Zandashé Brown is the Artist Development Coordinator & Programming Manager for the New Orleans Film Society. A filmmaker herself and former fellow of the Emerging Voices program, Brown now assists in the coordination of both filmmaker development programs including the Southern Producers Lab and Emerging Voices. She also organizes the Filmmaker Summit, a series of panels, talks, and workshops that take place yearly alongside the Academy Award-qualifying New Orleans Film Festival, where she also serves as a programmer.

Jason Fitzroy Jeffers is a Miami-based filmmaker and journalist from Barbados whose work primarily focuses on giving voice to the often-marginalized stories of the tropics. As a filmmaker, he has produced award-winning shorts such as *Papa Machete*, *Swimming in Your Skin Again* and *T* that have screened at festivals such as Sundance, Berlinale, TIFF, and more. As a journalist, his work has appeared on The Intercept and in The Miami Herald. He is Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of the creative collective [Third Horizon](#), which stages the annual Third Horizon Film Festival, a showcase of cinema from the Caribbean, its diasporas, and other underrepresented spaces in the Global South.

Rahi Hasan (they/them) is a formerly undocumented cultural organizer, impact producer, and multimedia documentary artist challenging power on all fronts to create space for healing and radical imagination. They immigrated to Queens, New York from Dhaka, Bangladesh before moving to Durham, NC 6 years ago. Rahi is currently the Program Coordinator of the [Documentary Arts Continuing Education Program](#) at the Center for Documentary Studies (CDS) at Duke University. Rahi is Co-Founder of the [Undocumented Filmmakers Collective](#) and on the board of [Migrant Roots Media](#). As the Strategic Advisor for International Initiatives at [Dhaka Doc Lab](#), Rahi is committed to supporting South Asian filmmakers get access to every tool they need to speak truth to power. Rahi was a [Lewis Hine Documentary Fellow](#) in 2017 and [Firelight Impact Producer Fellow](#) in 2018. For Rahi, "the process is the reason for creation" of their autobiographical work. When practiced in a state of heightened vulnerability, the

rituals of production ignite the possibility of healing, liberation, and the reclamation of power.

Angie Reza Tures has worked in independent film since 2003 after graduating from the University of San Francisco with a B.A. in Media Studies and minor in Music. For twelve years, she worked as a producer, director, and editor in the Bay Area mentoring under Oscar-nominated and Sundance award-winning documentary filmmakers. Since 2011, Angie has lived and worked in her hometown of El Paso, TX serving as the Executive Director of Femme Frontera, a film organization made up of female-identifying filmmakers from the U.S.-Mexico border region. Femme Frontera advocates for the amplification of films made by female-identifying filmmakers from borders across the globe. They celebrate these unique voices through showcasing work, funding female-directed projects, and providing film education.

Sherard “Shekeese” Duvall is a film and messaging professional from Columbia, S.C. He specializes in visual storytelling, film education, media strategy, diversity consulting and is an advocate of Hip-Hop culture. An accomplished producer of commercial and documentary projects for VH1, Oxygen, and more - he is a 2021 Liberty Fellow, a 2016 Riley Fellow, and one of the founders of Columbia’s Hip-Hop Family Day: Love Peace & Hip-Hop. A 2001 University of South Carolina grad, Sherard is a product of Richland District One schools. He is currently owner and executive producer at OTR Media Group, and the proud dad of his son, Cairo.

Jing Niu is interested in telling stories because stories map out the emotional gravity of our lived experiences. As a first generation Chinese-American immigrant who grew up in the South, she used art as a way to communicate long before learning her first words of English. Tackling both narrative and documentary stories helps Jing stay close to real people. In 2016 Jing spent three months walking around Japan’s smallest island, following the footsteps of a woman who lived one hundred years ago. The resulting film, “The Traveler Takamure” won the Hellen Hill Award at IndieGrits film festival. Jing began her directing career working for online media companies like Wired, Teen Vogue and Ars Technica. These videos have garnered millions of views and two Telly Awards. Soon afterwards, she started directing music videos, these videos have premiered on numerous online sites like The Fader, Flaunt Magazine, Sukeban, boooooooooom.tv and StereoGum.

Amada Torruella is a Central American filmmaker (Director/Producer/DP), community storyteller and film curator with 7 years of programming experience in the Southern film festival circuit, based between El Salvador and Los Angeles. Displaced with her family during the Salvadoran civil war, Amada's work is driven by the healing of our migration wounds, environmental justice, visual literacy and culture making with an emphasis on collaboration and experimentation. As someone striving to dismantle borders and their constraints, not only on our geo-policies but on our creativity, imaginations and geographies as well, Amada explores collective memory, intergenerational trauma, tropical identities and the Global South. Her work has been featured at the Blackstar Film Festival, the New Orleans Film Festival, the Indie Grits Festival, The Skirball Cultural Center, amongst others. She is a member of Brown Girls Doc Mafia and she’s VONA Voices alumni.

References and other Links

***Beyond Inclusion: The Critical Role of People of Color in the U.S. Documentary EcoSystem**

"Beyond Inclusion is researched and written by Sahar Driver, PhD. It outlines the relationship between documentary and social change, provides a critical overview of nonfiction film organizations led by and serving communities of color in the US, their impact in shaping a more equitable documentary sector, and how they advance non-fiction social justice filmmaking. It makes recommendations to funders and stakeholders on why and how these efforts should be resourced at this time."

www.fordfoundation.org/work/learning/research-reports/beyond-inclusion/

***Freedom Maps: Activating Legacies of Culture, Art and Organizing in the U.S. South**

Report by Ron Ragin and Maria Cherry Rangel. Co-commissioned by Ignite/Arts Dallas at SMU Meadows School of the Arts with additional support provided by Alternate ROOTS.

"THE SOUTH IS A PLACE OF GREAT OPPORTUNITY But the region's artists and cultural organizations are often overlooked and receive little institutional support. We hope this project will illuminate the incredible ways that Southern artists and cultural workers have found to create and share work, shape movements, sustain ourselves and our communities, and ultimately save lives. In response to our analysis, which shows stark divestment in Southern arts and culture when compared to the rest of the nation, we want to inspire funders and other resourced institutions to move more resources to grassroots efforts throughout the region."

<https://freedommaps.us/>

***South Summit Reports**

New Orleans Film Society organized its inaugural South Summit in 2018, with a goal of convening just a small portion of the robust brain-trust that gathers at its flagship event: the New Orleans Film Festival. Since its inception, more than 100 national, regional, and local media stakeholders have participated in the convening.

[2018 South Summit Report](#) & [2019 South Summit Report](#)

For more info visit: <https://neworleansfilmsociety.org/south-summit/>

***Who Is Telling Whose Story, To Whom, and Why? BY LISA VALENCIA-SVENSSON**

IDA Keynote Summary

<https://www.documentary.org/online-feature/who-telling-whose-story-whom-and-why>

Watch keynote video

<https://vimeo.com/340448254>

How global is the Journal of Refugee Studies?

<https://carleton.ca/lerrn/2020/how-global-is-the-journal-of-refugee-studies/>