

VOICES
WITH
IMPACT

MMXXV



WORLD PREMIERE
&
FILM FESTIVAL



WWW.VOICESWITHIMPACT.COM



Welcome

Some stories open our eyes. Others open our hearts. The short films in the 2025 Voices With Impact Mental Health Film Festival do both, inviting us to see familiar ideas in new ways and, together, imagine a more compassionate world.

Voices With Impact (VWI) is both a film production grant and short film festival. Each year, we find and fund a small cohort of emerging filmmakers to create five-minute films on underrepresented mental health topics. In just a few months, these powerful films take shape—telling vital stories in bold, new ways.

Our June festival releases these stories into the world, sowing them like wildflower seeds, inviting conversations to bloom in unexpected places, and brightening the landscape of mental health wherever they are seen.

We invite you to join us throughout the month of June to connect with filmmakers, mental health advocates, and fellow viewers in meaningful conversations sparked by the artistry of these films.

Thank you for being part of this experience,

Cary McQueen & Chris Hyde





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VWI is made possible by



CBH supports transformational change across mental health and service systems.



The APA Foundation promotes mental health literacy, connects underserved communities to needed care, and shifts attitudes about mental health.

A Town Called Needville

by Audrey Lane (Documentary, Ho Ho Kus, NJ, USA)



Through a personal collection of 35mm photos, a young woman explores healing by reflecting on her four-month journey at an all-women's mental health facility in Needville, Texas.

Audrey Lane is a documentary and fiction filmmaker from a small town in New Jersey. With a background in psychology and experience as a doula for end of life and special needs individuals, Audrey approaches storytelling with care and humility.



Animals

by Michael Makaroff (Drama, Vancouver, BC, Canada)



A coming-of-age drama following Lucas as he is confronted by his best friend, exploring how societal factors shape young men's understanding of boundaries and consent.

Michael Makaroff has directed music videos for Grammy and Juno winners and commercials for Arc'teryx, BC & Alberta Milk, and P&G. His short film *The Dog* won acclaim, earning multiple awards, including Best BC Film and Best Screenwriting.



Focus Throw

by Kie Cummings (Hereford, UK)



We follow Paralympic javelin champion Dan on his journey through progressive sight loss, resilience, and self-discovery.

UK-based filmmaker creating character-driven work across documentary, drama, and promo. Kie Cummings explores themes of visibility, resilience, and identity through metaphor, lived experience, and a collaborative, visually distinctive approach to storytelling.



In My Skin

by Jaye Abhau & Evangeline Modell (Documentary, London, UK)



A visual poem exploring the parallel metamorphoses of women's bodies and the earth: Mother Nature reimagined.

Jaye Abhau is a documentary filmmaker drawn to stories at the intersection of people and place. Evangeline Modell is a producer, photographer, and journalist working across adventure TV production, branded content, and investigative journalism.



I Bathe With Moths

by Myranda Hulka (Stop Motion Animation, Oxford, UK / Portland, OR)



A woman in the military struggles with anxiety in the form of a moth infestation in her room.

Myranda Hulka is a director and stop-motion animator from Portland Oregon, using puppetry to tell fantastical stories that push the boundaries of how animation can reflect the deepest corners of our mind.



i absolutely hate this place

by Gabriel Souza Nunes (Drama, Vancouver, BC, Canada)



After a string of romantic misfires, Omar confronts the unsettling possibility that his own body may be a barrier to love.

Gabriel Souza Nunes is an award-winning gender-queer Brazilian filmmaker based in Vancouver, BC. Their work is frequently inspired by Latin American folklore, Magical Realism and gender expressions, exploring themes like nostalgia and diasporic relationships.



Looking Glass

by Ivanna Samuel (Drama, Vancouver, BC, Canada)



After an encounter with a mythological African being, an aspiring dancer loses the ability to see herself in the mirror.

Ivanna Samuel is an actor, spoken-word poet, and filmmaker based in Vancouver. She created the short film "Who We Are" and is the writer & director of "The Book of Black Voices". Her films reflect themes of mental health and self-expression.



Sorry I Missed Your Call

by Hae Ji Cho (Mixed Media Doc, Los Angeles, CA, USA)



Through a series of real voicemails, this film guides us through a woman's journey as she revisits the turmoil of caretaking for her grandmother as she develops Alzheimer's.

Hae Ji Cho (she/her) is a Korean Brazilian American writer, director, and producer based in Los Angeles, CA. Her creative work shines light on the beauty and grief within the endless contradictions and peculiarities found in the human experience.



The Spinning Wheel

by Davy Stoces & Max Wasserstrom (Animation, St Louis, MO, USA)



A strange bug-like creature spins Grey's negative thoughts into golden thread—until its spinning wheel breaks.

Davy Stoces (they/them) is an award-winning animator with a passion for storytelling. “The Spinning Wheel” is their first professional film. Max Wasserstrom (He/Him) is a Saint Louis University Law student and award-winning writer and long-time collaborator of Davy.



Unfolding

by Meghna Chakraborty & Iris (Yi Youn) Kim (Documentary, LA, CA, USA)



One year after ex-USC gynecologist George Tyndall's death & criminal case dismissal, Japanese American alum and survivor Mai breaks her silence to find healing beyond the courtroom.

Meghna Chakraborty is a director, producer and dancer/choreographer. Receiving her MFA from USC, and her B.S. in Business Administration at USC's Marshall School. Iris Kim is a Korean American reporter at NBC News & graduated from USC's Marshall School of Business.



Mentorship

Voices with Impact Filmmakers receive one-on-one guidance from carefully paired industry mentors and feedback from mental health professionals throughout the creative process, empowering each filmmaker to produce their best work yet.

Nancy Schwartzman



Nancy Schwartzman is an Emmy winning and Peabody nominated documentary filmmaker and a member of the Directors Guild of America & the Academy of Motion Pictures & Sciences. She is the Director & Executive Producer of the series *Sasha Reid* and the *Midnight Order* for Freeform/Hulu and Disney+.

Bomani J Story



Bomani J. Story is a writer/director born in Riverside, California and raised in Redlands. Bomani wrote *Rock Steady Row*, which won the Grand Jury Prize at Slamdance Film Festival (2018). In 2023, his directorial debut, *The Angry Black Girl and Her Monster* world premiered at SXSW and was nominated for a NAACP Award.

Edmund Stenson



Edmund Stenson's work as director spans both documentary and fiction and focuses on social issues, loners and nomads. He most recently directed BLINK, a National Geographic feature about a family's challenges with retinitis pigmentosa. Before that, he was an associate editor on BAFTA- and Oscar®-winner *Navalny*.

Natalie Sandy



Natalie Sandy is a television and film producer based out of Los Angeles, whose credits include the "Lessons In Chemistry" for Apple TV+ which was nominated for ten Emmys, the BAFTA-nominated series "Little America" for Apple TV+ and the limited series about the rise and fall of WeWork, "WeCrashed".

Glenn Holsten



Glenn Holsten is a documentary storyteller who creates human-driven films, from the arts to the sciences. His background in literature is a key element in his work, which features strong characters and compelling narrative structures.

Gavin Seal



Gavin Seal is a Québécois Canadian filmmaker on a mission to dissolve otherness using the universal language of cinema. Writer/director credits include fiction, "Followers" and "Case Claus'd" (CBC Short Film Faceoff), and documentary, "Good Luck Have Fun" (NSI, Just for Laughs).

Fu Yang



Fu Yang is a Taiwanese filmmaker. She brings unique handmade design and combines stopmotion, traditional animation and motion graphics in her projects. She creates award-winning animated shorts, recently working with Nickelodeon, she shares knowledge interviewing filmmakers on her podcast, Nice Shorts.

Jeff Lee Petry



Jeff Lee Petry is a Canadian-born documentary producer, director, and cinematographer. He is co-founder of SALAZAR Film, a Vancouver-based production company that focuses on unique stories of individuals whose lives create change within their communities.

Mitra Shahidi



Mitra Shahidi is an Iranian-American story artist, director and screenwriter who was born and raised in Istanbul, Turkey. Shahidi's passion for art and storytelling began at a young age and led her to pursue a career in animation, eventually working as a story artist for Pixar.

Josephine Anderson



Josephine Anderson is a documentary filmmaker who works across linear and immersive modes to address themes like time, irreverence, yearning, and female experience. Josephine's work has been shown at festivals worldwide including Tribeca, IDFA, Hot Docs and RIDM.

Online Festival

From June 5-30 Voices With Impact will share over 30 short films, 8 industry talks, deep dive interviews with the filmmakers and playback from the world premiere available on-demand. Registration is free.

June 5: Mental Health Filmmaking

An Industry Talk With Glenn Holsten



Glenn Holsten discusses his approach to mental health filmmaking, from funding projects to working in collaboration with his subjects. Glenn has worked for PBS and independently across the world. He regularly directs shorts for his project the Recovery Diaries focused on giving the red carpet treatment to his subjects' stories.

June 6: Mental Health Shorts 1

Short Films Exploring Mind & Body



June 7: Virtual Reality & Directing

An industry talk With Josephine Anderson



Josephine Anderson discusses her new feature *Curl Power*, directing VR, documentary and TV for CBC. Highlighting the community of BC filmmakers, how long it can take to get a project off the ground, the difficulties of filming in 360 and managing your work load as a filmmaker.

June 9: Screenwriting

An industry talk With Bomani J Story



Bomani J Story is the writer director of NAAMI nominated *'The Angry Black Girl & Her Monster'* a reimagining of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Bomani speaks to VWI in detail about his writing process, perseverance, navigating the industry as a writer, and how having a manager changed his career.

June 10: Production & Apple TV+

An industry talk With Natalie Sandy



Natalie Sandy from Piece of Work Entertainment discusses finding new talent, developing shows for Apple TV+ and her day to day experiences as a Producer. She offers advice for budding writers and gives a unique view into the industry. Natalie has worked on hits like *Little America*, and *WeCrashed*.

June 11: Canadian Funding

An Industry Talk With Gavin Seal



Gavin Seal is a Québécois Canadian filmmaker, a VWI alumni, writers Guild of Canada prize-winner & Chief Creative Officer at Intersectionnel Films. Gavin speaks to VWI about funding options and production routes for independent filmmakers in Canada.

June 12: Premiere Playback

All 10 New VWI Films For 2025



June 13: Mental Health Shorts 2

Short films about Parents & Children



June 16: Unique Career Paths

An Industry Talk With Cassidy Civiero



Cassidy Civiero is an accomplished actor turned, prolific producer (CBC), turned daring director, and VWI alumnus. Cassidy speaks to VWI about his journey and how career paths can look very different. If you aren't sure where you are going, this may give you some direction.

June 17: Directing Documentary

An Industry Talk With Edmund Stenson



National Geographic Director, BAFTA- and Oscar®-winner Assistant editor, Edmund Stenson, discusses pitching to distributors, and directing his new film 'Blink'. Edmund shares advice on career paths, navigating the industry, and the importance of email craft.

June 18: Discussion Panel Playback

Recording Of The Live Premiere Panel



Recording of the discussion panel from the VWI world premiere. You can watch the filmmakers discuss their projects and get a peak into what happened behind the scenes.

June 19: Documentary Shorts

VWI 2025 Documentary Shorts



The documentaries from this year's VWI production grant will be live for you to watch with bonus behind the scenes content including a filmmaker interview. Films: **Focus Throw** by Kie Cummings, **In My Skin** by Jaye Abhau & Evangeline Modell, **Unfolding** by Meghna Chakraborty, Iris Kim & Priscilla Jayne, and **A Town Called Needville** by Audrey Lane.

June 20: Mental Health Shorts 3

Shorts Exploring Place & Self



June 23: Drama Shorts

VWI 2025 Drama Shorts



The Dramas from this year's VWI production grant will be live for you to watch with bonus behind the scenes content including a filmmaker interview. Films: **Looking Glass** by Ivanna Samuel, **Animals** by Michael Makaroff, and **I absolutely hate this place** by Gabriel Souza Nunes.

June 24: Costume Design

With Saltburn Designer Sophie Canale



Sophie Canale multi-award winning Costume Designer for Bridgerton & Saltburn talks to VWI about working her way up the ranks in the costume department, how a Designer works with the rest of the production with advice for budding designers. A must see.

June 25: Animation Shorts

VWI 2025 Animation Shorts



The Animations from this year's VWI production grant will be live for you to watch with bonus behind the scenes content including a filmmaker interview. Films: **The Spinning Wheel** by Davy Stoces & Max Wasserstrom, **Bathe With Moths** by Myranda Hulka, and **Sorry I Missed Your Call** by Hae Ji Cho.

June 26: Independent Filmmaking

Industry talk With Story Artist Mitra Shahidi



Story artist and independent filmmaker Mitra Shahidi works across both animation and live action, she shares her approach to getting projects done around a full life. She gives insights to productivity and rest as an indie maker and how community is the most important part.

June 27: Mental Health Shorts 4

Shorts Exploring Love & Loss



June 30: 2026 Grant Launch

Live Grant Information Session



Join us live and online for our film production grant launch for 2026 where we will share the theme for the new grant cycle and share all the information you need to apply. We'll screen past winning films and share proposal templates and other important materials to give you the best chance.

How to register for VWI Online

Scan the QR code.

Select the event you want to register for, click 'Register for this event', add a donation if you'd like.

Keep an eye on your email for your notification for when the program is available to view. Watch whenever you like.

Repeat for every event you want to watch.



Mental Health Resources

We platform films that explore mental health themes, so we encourage you to use the resources below should you need to.

To access support right now:
Call or text 988

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

If you would like to see our curated list of resources please visit our site:



voiceswithimpact.com/support



How did we do?

We'd love to hear your thoughts,
so please fill out our evaluation.



Festival On-Demand!

Want more films and festival content?
VWI is online and on demand June 5-30!



Watch short film packages from over 30 filmmakers from across the globe, 8 industry talks, deep dive interviews with filmmakers and playback from the Voices With Impact premiere.

watch.eventive.org/voiceswithimpact

**You will also be able to watch back all the films
(and bonus behind the scenes content)
from VWI 25 throughout June!**



Want to support our work?
You can donate by scanning the QR code.