

# American Documentary

## 'POV' and 'America ReFramed' host the 2023 Wyncote Fellows at PBS Annual Meeting

Twelve filmmakers nominated by PBS Indies partners POV, ITVS, Firelight Media, America ReFramed, Reel South, WORLD, and the National Multicultural Alliance

Sixth annual cohort of independent filmmakers to engage with public media leaders from around the country, with support from Wyncote Foundation

New York, N.Y. — May 10, 2023 — American Documentary, the nonprofit organization behind award-winning series [POV](#) and [America ReFramed](#), will host the filmmakers selected for the sixth annual Wyncote Fellowship program this May at the 2023 PBS Annual Meeting in San Diego.

Coordinated by American Documentary, the Wyncote Fellowship is a collaboration between PBS Indies partners with filmmakers nominated by POV, Firelight Media, ITVS, Reel South, America ReFramed, WORLD, and the National Multicultural Alliance. Made possible with support from Wyncote Foundation, the program helps independent filmmakers better understand the public media landscape through one-on-one meetings and curated events during PBS Annual Meeting.

"Wyncote Foundation has been proud to support this valuable fellowship since its inception in 2017, and we are thrilled to be back in person this year" said David Haas, vice chair. "These innovative filmmakers truly exemplify the broad range of diverse and compelling voices that public media brings to local communities and national audiences."

This year, a cohort of 12 Wyncote Fellows will explore opportunities to learn more about the public media landscape through participation in small group sessions, peer and station networking. Several fellows will be featured in upcoming programs on POV, POV Shorts, and America ReFramed including Christina Antonakos-Wallace, dream hampton, Set Hernandez, and So Yun Um.

## MEET THE 2023 WYNCOTE FILMMAKER FELLOWS



**Nina Alvarez** is a journalist, documentarian and video photographer. She is also a full time faculty member of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. Alvarez has produced and directed documentaries and video stories about the historical and modern experiences of migration as well as stories of refugees, undocumented laborers, victims of violence, the aftermaths of war and natural disasters, and the trafficking of women and girls. For over twenty-five years, she has reported breaking news and feature stories from around the world, on broadcast and web segments, radio reports and long-form documentaries. Alvarez began her journalism career at ABC News, where she was a production associate on the acclaimed documentary series, Turning Point. She went on to work in the Miami Bureau covering news in the southeast US and Latin America and established the Mexico City Bureau in 1997, reporting and producing breaking news, feature and investigative stories in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2001, she has reported and produced news and longform stories for Univision, NBC, CNN, NPR, MTV News and Al Jazeera from the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and Latin America.





**Christina Antonakos-Wallace** is a filmmaker, cultural organizer, active community member, and mama. A lifelong activist for social and economic justice, she tells stories that aim to illuminate our inherent belonging and build power for social justice and transformation. Awards include Best Documentary Feature (NY Human Rights Film Festival, Local Sightings Film Festival, Oklahoma Latino Film Festival 2020), Best Editing (New Filmmakers LA, 2022), Erasmus Euromedia Award for Culture & Diversity (2011), a Media that Matters Change Maker Award (2012), and others. Her films and interactive work have been exhibited in over twenty countries through festivals including Dok Leipzig and the Human Rights Watch Film Festival, schools, galleries, NGOs, and corporations. She was a Fellow at Hedgebrook and the Port Townsend Film Festival, and holds a BFA/BA from the New School & Parsons School of Design. Her work was recognized with a five-year MTV Fight For Your Rights Scholarship (2002) and a Humanity in Action Fellowship (2006), which she completed at the United Nations High Commission on Refugees in Berlin. FROM HERE, her first feature-length film, will broadcast on AmericaReFramed/WORLD in June 2023. The fifteen-year project grew out of personal questions of identity, race and how to advance social justice, growing up as a queer kid in the Greek-American diaspora. FROM HERE spurred an ongoing transatlantic organization [WithWingAandRoots.org](http://WithWingAandRoots.org), that produces media, events, campaigns, and more to reframe migration, expand citizenship, and reimagine belonging.



**Ngawang Choephel** was born in Dawa, a small county in western Tibet. During the height of the Cultural Revolution, at the age of two, Ngawang and his family escaped to India. He grew up in a vibrant Tibetan refugee community in Southern India. Because of his lifelong passion for Tibetan music, he has devoted himself to its preservation and dissemination. Discovering his talent at an early age, he pursued and received a degree in Tibetan Music from the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts in Dharamsala, India. Arriving in the West in 1994, he became a Fulbright Fellow at Middlebury College in Vermont and continued studies in video production and international music in preparation for the production of his award winning film, TIBET IN SONG. After being arrested by Chinese authorities in Tibet during filming, and his subsequent 6 1/2 years in prison in Tibet, showing resilience in the face of adversity earned him the Courage of Conscience Award from Peace Abbey, which he received in 2002. Upon his release from prison that same year, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Arts Degree from Middlebury College, as well as 'Best Act in Exile' award from Lobsang Wangyal Productions for his outstanding musical talent.

Ngawang continues his work for Tibet and has made two documentary films to date: Tibet in Song and Ganden: A Joyful Land.



**Katja Esson** is an Academy Award-nominated filmmaker based in Miami. Known for her intimate character-driven documentaries tackling race, class, and gender, her credits include FERRY TALES which turns the unlikely setting of the Staten Island Ferry Powder Room into a celebration of sisterhood (HBO 2004). In 2007, HOLE IN THE SKY - THE SCARS OF 9/11 received the Gold-Award at the World-Media-Festival. Her 2011 film SKYDANCER, about two Mohawk ironworkers torn between the Akwesasne reservation and New York City, received nominations for Best Film, Best Director, and Best Cinematography at the Shanghai Film Festival and premiered on PBS and ARTE in 2011. Katja's POETRY OF RESILIENCE was nominated for the Cinema for Peace Award in 2012. Her five-part documentary series BACKROADS USA (2014) and AMERICAN RIVERS (2016) premiered on ARTE and PBS in 2018. A Simons-Public Humanities Fellow at Kansas University, her films have screened at the Museum of Modern Art, American Museum of Natural History, and the Smithsonian. Katja's work has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Knight Foundation, ITVS, Black Public Media, IDA, NYSCA, Chicken and Egg, Working Films, Doc Society, the Redford Center, Sundance and the Ford Foundation.



**dream hampton** is an award winning filmmaker and writer from Detroit.



**Set Hernandez** is a filmmaker and community organizer whose roots come from Bicol, Philippines. As a queer, undocumented immigrant, they dedicate their filmmaking to expand the portrayal of their communities on screen. Set's past documentary work includes the award-winning short "COVER/AGE" (2019) and impact producing for "Call Her Ganda" (Tribeca, 2018). An alumnus of the Disruptors Fellowship, Set is also developing a TV comedy pilot and a feature-length screenplay. Since 2010, Set has been organizing around migrant justice issues, from deportation defense to healthcare access. They co-founded the Undocumented Filmmakers Collective which promotes equity for undocumented immigrants in the film industry. Set's work has been supported by the Sundance Institute, NBCUniversal, Ford Foundation, Open Society Foundations, among others. In their past life, Set was a published linguistics researcher, focusing in the area of bilingualism. Above all, Set is the fruit of their family's love and their community's generosity.



**Sam Mirpoorian** is an award-winning Iranian-American filmmaker exploring societal themes at the intersection of time, isolation, health, science, and introspection. His debut feature documentary, Greener Pastures, world premiered at the 42nd MSP Film Festival in Minneapolis and will screen at the 2023 Mountainfilm Festival in Telluride, Colorado. The film is executive produced by Emmy Award-winners, David J. Cornfield and Linda A. Cornfield (THE SOCIAL DILEMMA, WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?, CHASING CORAL). Greener Pastures is also supported by the Catapult Film Fund, Doc Society, and Exposure Labs.

During his undergrad and grad studies at Indiana University, Samuel was a recipient of the Kodak Motion Picture Film Bronze Award for Excellence in Filmmaking. In 2018, Sam edited and produced a documentary short, Destination Park. The film premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York and made its online premiere via The Atlantic in 2019. In 2020, Samuel's second doc-short, Sonnie, played and won awards from over 40 film festivals across the United States and is a recipient of the Kodak Motion Picture Film Bronze Award for Excellence in Filmmaking. Sonnie won three Regional Emmy® Awards and was acquired by NBC, making its broadcast premiere via Peacock in 2021. His latest documentary short, Safe Place, is currently playing in festivals after being acquired by The New York Times in January 2023.



**JoeBill Muñoz** is a Mexican-American director and producer. He's recently produced several films and television series for the Center for Investigative Reporting, Left/Right Media and The New York Times, and is currently directing an independent feature documentary about solitary confinement in California prisons. His most recent film, MALETERO, was commissioned by ITVS and premiered on PBS in 2023. As a producer, he's worked on THE CIRCUS (Showtime), THE NEW YORK TIMES PRESENTS (Hulu), and THE GRAB (TIFF 2022), a feature documentary directed by Gabriela Cowperthwaite in collaboration with the Center for Investigative Reporting. His independent work has been supported by the Sundance Documentary Fund, Firelight Media, ITVS, SFFILM, the Reva and David Logan Foundation, and others. Originally from Houston, Texas, he currently resides in New York City.



**Mohammed Ali Naqvi** is a filmmaker whose works explore human rights, social justice, and identity in contemporary Muslim and South Asian narratives. As a member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, Naqvi has received two Amnesty International Human Rights Awards and a Grand Prix from the United Nations Association Festival. He served as Co-Executive Producer on the Netflix Original "Turning Point: 9/11 and the War on Terror," and received the inaugural Emmy Television Academy™ Honor for "Shame," a Showtime Original film about women's rights activist Mukhtaran Mai. Naqvi's other notable works include the Emmy-nominated "Among the Believers," documenting Taliban ally Cleric Abdul Aziz Ghazi's attempt to indoctrinate children into jihad. He also won the Asian Media Award for "The Accused: Damned Or Devoted?," which sheds light on Pakistan's controversial Blasphemy Law. Naqvi's "Insha'Allah Democracy," is an intimate portrait of exiled former Military Dictator General Pervez Musharraf's election run while facing treason charges. Naqvi's films have a

real-world impact; his film "Pakistan's Hidden Shame" led to the opening of a shelter for homeless children in KPK province by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. Naqvi also produced "Big River," a road-trip drama, and "I Will Avenge You Iago," an indie comedy featuring Giancarlo Esposito and Larry Pine. Naqvi enjoys spending time with animals, a passion he has had since his childhood when he kept two lions as pets.



**Kayla Robinson** is a filmmaker and artist from San Antonio, TX, who began her journey into storytelling through advertising as an award-winning Art Director in New York. Blossoming in Silicon Valley, she developed films and integrated campaigns for brands like Snickers, Visa, and Apple. Kayla's work has received honors at Cannes Lions, Clio, D&AD, The One Show, and more. Her work has been featured in publications such as Adweek, AdAge, The Drum, and Hypebeast, to name a few. As a director, Kayla was notably featured in the Los Angeles Times, portraying her skill set in creating films worth crowdfunding. Passionate about capturing authentic human experiences, Kayla harnesses vulnerability as a superpower and unleashes it in her personal work. Her directorial debut, *Ball is Ball*, has received high praise for its honest portrayal of PTSD and its psychological effects on trauma survivors. Her latest film, *Quilted Education*, celebrates her mother's artistry and determination to fill the educational gaps regarding Black History within the public school system. Premiering at the 2022 Austin Film Festival, *Quilted Education* became an official selection for the New Orleans Film Festival, resulting in distribution through PBS Reel South.



**Andy Sarjahani** is an Iranian-American documentary filmmaker and cinematographer raised in a working class community outside the Arkansas Ozarks. He is interested in people, our relationship to place and how that shapes our worldview. His current work focuses on masculinity, nuance within the American South, threats to democracy, and climate change adaptation. He holds an MS in Sustainable Agriculture/Food Systems and left academia in 2012 to tell stories with a camera. He has worked as a documentary cinematographer for VICE, Al Jazeera, Story Syndicate, and PBS. His personal work has been supported by The New Yorker, Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), ITVS, DOC NYC, New Orleans Film Society, Southern Documentary Fund, Reel South, PBS, Arkansas Humanities Council, Asian Doc Network, Video Consortium, and Antenna. His current feature documentary, *IRANIAN HILLBILLY* was a Southern Documentary Fund 2022 production grant recipient and the winner of New Orleans Film Festival 2022 South Pitch. He is a 2023 CAAM Fellow and 2023 PBS Wyncote Fellow. He regularly watches *Thelma and Louise* with his devil hound, June.



**So Yun Um** is a Korean American Director and Producer born and based in Los Angeles. She explores intimate and challenging stories of marginalized people with piercing humanity and poignant editing style. Her directorial debut documentary feature film, LIQUOR STORE DREAMS about second generation Korean American children of Liquor Store owners in the LA area, made its world premiere at the 2022 Tribeca Film Festival. Her work has screened at Tribeca Film Festival, Busan International Film Festival, BFI London and more. Currently, So is a 2022-2023 BAFTA Breakthrough USA participant. She is an alumnus of the 2021 CAAM Fellowship, Armed with a Camera Fellowship by Visual Communication, recipient of the Sundance Uprise Grant and a Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program Grantee.

## THE PARTNERS



[America ReFramed](#) is a year-round anthology series airing on WORLD. Every year, the series premieres a dozen new documentaries in addition to thematic curation from its deep catalog that explore the nation's most timely topics—including civil rights, immigration, the environment, and more. Currently in its eleventh season, America ReFramed is long regarded as a critical platform for diverse voices in public media and a launchpad for new independent filmmakers. In its landmark first decade, the series supported a total of 395 filmmakers with acquisition fees, national broadcasts, marketing campaigns, and awards submissions. Digital engagement strategies include live online film chats alongside broadcast on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, PBS, and a presence on both the AmDoc and WORLD websites.



[Firelight Media](#) is a premier destination for non-fiction cinema by and about communities of color. Firelight Media produces documentary films, supports filmmakers of color, and cultivates audiences for their work. Firelight Media's programs include the Documentary Lab, an 18-month fellowship that supports emerging filmmakers of color; Groundwork Regional Lab, which supports filmmakers in the American south, midwest, and U.S.-controlled Territories; the PBS/Firelight William Greaves Production Fund for mid-career nonfiction filmmakers from racially and ethnically underrepresented communities, and the FRONTLINE/Firelight Investigative Journalism Fellowship. Firelight Media also produces short films in partnership with public media partners,



including American Masters *In the Making: Season 2*, and the upcoming collection *Homegrown: Future Visions*, publishing on PBS Digital Studios on May 4th.



ITVS is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films, and then airs them for free on PBS via our weekly series, INDEPENDENT LENS, as well as on other PBS series, and through our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The National Endowment for the Humanities: American Rescue Plan, Acton Family Giving, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation. For more information, visit [itvs.org](http://itvs.org).



Produced by American Documentary, [POV](#) is the longest-running independent documentary showcase on American television. Since 1988, POV has presented films on PBS that capture the full spectrum of the human experience, with a long commitment to centering women and people of color in front of, and behind, the camera. In 2018, POV Shorts launched as one of the first PBS series dedicated to bold and timely short-form documentaries. To date, POV films have won 45 Emmy Awards, 26 George Foster Peabody Awards, 155 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards and the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award. Learn more at [pbs.org/pov](http://pbs.org/pov) and follow @povdocs on social media.



[Reel South](#) is a platform for and a service to non-fiction filmmakers in the American South revealing the region's proud, diverse, and complicated heritage. The documentary series curates, distributes, and commissions filmmakers honoring the South's legacy of storytelling and creating bold work for public media and beyond. The series is co-produced by PBS North Carolina, South Carolina ETV, and Louisiana Public Broadcasting and produced in association with Alabama Public Television, Arkansas PBS, Texas PBS, Tennessee Public Television Council, and VPM. Facebook/Twitter/Instagram @reelsouthdocs



WORLD shares the best of public media in news, documentaries and programming. WORLD's original series examine the issues and amplify the voices of those often ignored by mainstream media. The multicast 24/7 channel helps audiences understand conflicts, movements and cultures from around the globe. Its original work has won a Peabody Award, an Alfred I. duPont- Columbia Award, an International Documentary Association Award, a National News and Documentary Emmy Award, two Webby Awards and many others honoring diversity of content and makers. WORLD is carried by 194 member stations in markets representing 77% of US TV households. Funding for WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wyncote Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts and Artworks. WORLD is produced by GBH in partnership with WNET and is distributed by American Public Television (APT). Find out more at [WORLDChannel.org](http://WORLDChannel.org).



An alliance of five distinct national organizations, who, with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), bring the authentic stories and diverse perspectives of America's multicultural communities to public media and its digital platforms. The [NMCA](#) is comprised of the following organizations: Latino Public Broadcasting, Black Public Media, Vision Maker Media, Pacific Islanders in Communications, and the Center for Asian American Media.

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### **About POV**

Produced by American Documentary, POV is the longest-running independent documentary showcase on American television. Since 1988, POV has presented films on PBS that capture the full spectrum of the human experience, with a long commitment to centering women and people of color in front of, and behind, the camera. The series is known for introducing generations of viewers to groundbreaking works like *Tongues Untied*, *American Promise* and *Minding The Gap* and innovative filmmakers including Jonathan Demme, Laura Poitras and Nanfu Wang. In 2018, POV Shorts launched as one of the first PBS series dedicated to bold and timely short-form documentaries. All POV programs are available for

streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org) and the [PBS App](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](#) website.

POV goes “beyond the broadcast” to bring powerful nonfiction storytelling to viewers wherever they are. Free educational resources accompany every film and a community network of thousands of partners nationwide work with POV to spark dialogue around today’s most pressing issues. POV continues to explore the future of documentary through innovative productions with partners such as *The New York Times* and The National Film Board of Canada and on platforms including Snapchat and Instagram.

POV films and projects have won 45 Emmy Awards, 26 George Foster Peabody Awards, 15 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards® and the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award. Learn more at [pbs.org/pov](https://pbs.org/pov) and follow @povdocs on social media.

### **About America ReFramed**

America ReFramed is a co-production of [WORLD Channel](#) and [American Documentary, Inc.](#) The series curates a diverse selection of independent documentaries that brings to national audiences compelling stories which illuminate the changing contours of our ever-evolving country. Viewers will be immersed in stories that span the spectrum of American life, from the streets of towns big and small to its exurbs and country roads. The documentary series presents an array of personal voices and experiences through which we learn from our past, understand our present and are challenged to seek new frameworks for America’s future.

America ReFramed received a Peabody Award for [Deej](#) and an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award for [Class of '27](#). The series has earned several Christopher, GRACIE, Telly and Cine Golden Eagle Awards, as well as multiple nominations for Emmy, Independent Documentary Association and Imagen Awards.

### **About American Documentary, Inc.**

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

Major funding for POV is provided by PBS, the Open Society Foundations, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Wyncote Foundation, Reva & David Logan Foundation, Park Foundation, and Perspective Fund. Additional funding comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the National Multicultural Alliance, Chris and Nancy Plaut, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee and public television viewers. POV is presented by a consortium of public television stations, including KQED San Francisco, WGBH Boston and THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG.

### **About PBS**

[PBS](#), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS's broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirm that PBS's premier children's media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](#), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](#), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](#) or by following [PBS Communications on Twitter](#).