



**POV's 'unseen', a Powerful Story of Resilience and Healing
Set in the Intersection of Disability and Migration,
Has Theatrical Release in Advance of its Broadcast Premiere**

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Credit: Set Hernandez

**The Debut Feature by Set Hernandez Opens November 17, 2023
at [DCTV's Firehouse Cinema](#) in New York City, and
Premieres on POV March 18, 2024 on PBS Television**

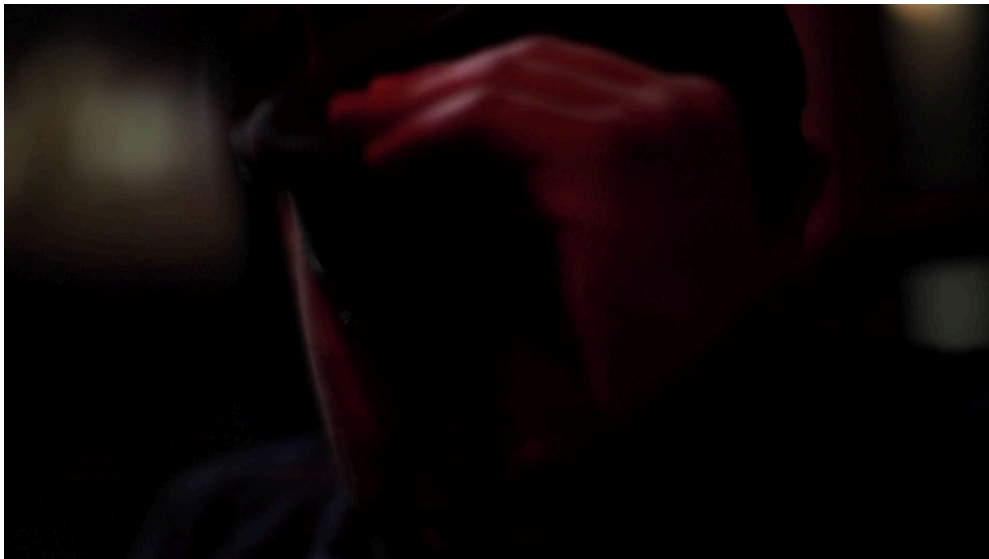
Brooklyn, N.Y. — November 1, 2023 — Multi Emmy® Award-winning series, POV, reimagines a cinema more accessible for audiences with vision loss in [unseen](#), the debut film by Filipino-American director Set Hernandez. Through experimental cinematography and sound, the documentary's person-first approach centers the lived experiences of a queer filmmaker and blind protagonist whose undocumented status has impacted their choices. This powerful work explores the intersections of immigration, disability, mental health and belonging. *unseen* is produced by Hernandez, Day Al-Mohamed, and Félix Endara; co-produced by Dorian Gomez Pestaña; and POV alum and Academy Award® nominee Diane Quon (*Minding the Gap*, *Wuhan*, *Wuhan*) is the executive producer.

unseen will have a one-week run at [DCTV's Firehouse Cinema](#) in New York, starting Friday, November 17, before making its national broadcast premiere on POV Monday, March 18 at

10pmET/9C (check local listings) on the PBS television channel, and will be available to stream until June 16, 2024 via [pbs.org](https://www.pbs.org), and the [PBS App](#).

Made over the course of seven years of friendship, ***unseen*** begins as an observational journey of Pedro, an aspiring social worker who happens to be a blind undocumented immigrant, confronting political restrictions in order to get his college degree. Guided by a conversation between him and director Hernandez, ***unseen*** explores Pedro's relationships to everyone around him: his family who supports him while he studies to become a mental health professional, and his triathlon coach who encourages him on long distance bike rides. The film is a jagged quest towards healing in a society that struggles to see those with these challenges as multi-dimensional.

To personalize this story, Hernandez chose to shoot the documentary at times without a lens and with handheld cameras in order to craft an audio-first cinematic experience. Inspired by the experience of watching a film with audio description, ***unseen***'s often out-of-focus cinematography is not to simulate the experience of a blind viewer, but an invitation to watch a film by listening as opposed to seeing it visually.



"I originally conceived of ***unseen*** for advocacy; to bring awareness to Pedro's layered experience around disability and immigration," said director, Set Hernandez. "But I soon realized that confining Pedro only within the parameters of his identities and struggles misses the fullness of his story. In the end, the film became about vulnerability and showing up as one's fullest, most authentic self. I hope audiences can have that same experience when they watch ***unseen***."

I am especially humbled to partner with POV, considering its commitment to social impact. Growing up in a working-class immigrant household, my family could never afford cable. I've been watching public television (PBS) since I was 12 years old. As POV pushes the envelope for broadcasting accessibility through its virtual platforms, public television provides the perfect home for ***unseen***. It allows us to reach viewers at the heart of our film who are often overlooked as primary audiences for cinema; people who are undocumented and/or have disabilities."

"Director Set Hernandez's ***unseen*** is a profoundly moving story of one man's quest to realize his dreams in spite of unimaginable obstacles," said Chris White, executive producer, POV. "Set's use of

inventive cinematography and sound will deepen your understanding of Pedro's experience and illuminate the unique challenges he faces within xenophobic and ableist social structures. More than anything you'll be touched by Pedro's kind and loving spirit."

unseen made its world premiere at Hot Docs 2023 and made this year's IDA Documentary Awards Features Shortlist. The film was celebrated at the 2023 Blackstar Film Festival, and won the "Documentary Jury Award" at CAAMFest 2023 and was a nominee for the "Leon Gast Award for Best Documentary," at the 24th Annual Woodstock Film Festival. At the 2023 Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival **unseen** won the "Emerging Filmmaker Award," "Special Jury Mention" and the "Audience Award."

unseen is a co-presentation with Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) and POV. The director is Set Hernandez and the producers are Hernandez, Day Al-Mohamed, Diane Quon and Félix Endara. The co producer is Dorian Gomez Pestaña and executive producer is Diane Quon. The editor is Daniel Chávez-Ontiveros, music composer is DeAndre James Allen-Toole, Songwriter is Julie Yeeun Kim, and the impact producers are Qudsiya Naqui and Conchita Hernandez Legorreta.

Now in its historic [36th season](#), POV continues to share bold, visionary stories as America's longest running non-fiction series on television. In addition to standard closed captioning for all films, POV, in partnership with audio description service [DiCapta](#), provides real time audio interpretations for audiences with sensory disabilities.

unseen will be available for streaming concurrently with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](#) and the [PBS Video App](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](#). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](#) website.

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Download **unseen** photos [here](#)

[unseen Trailer with audio descriptions](#)

[unseen Trailer - Spanish language](#)

Credits

Director: Set Hernandez

Producers: Set Hernandez, Day Al-Mohamed, Félix Endara

Co-producer: Dorian Gomez Pestaña

Executive producers: Diane Quon and Erika Dilday and Chris White for American Documentary

Cast: Pedro

Written by: Set Hernandez, Daniel Chávez-Ontiveros, Pedro

Cinematographer: Set Hernandez

Additional Cinematography: Richard Hama

Editors: Daniel Chávez-Ontiveros, Set Hernandez

Animators: Jesse Kerman

Composer: DeAndre James Allen-Toole, Original Song by Julie Yeeun Kim, Original Song Produced by Brandon Jung

Sound Design: IMRSV Sound

Running Time: 88 minutes

Languages: English, Spanish

Country: USA

Year: 2023

About the Filmmakers

Pedro, Protagonist, Co-Writer, *unseen*

Pedro is a social worker, who is devoted to providing vision rehabilitation and mental health services for marginalized groups. As a blind undocumented immigrant himself, the intersectionality between immigration, blindness, and mental health has been a constant in his life. With the support of his family and community, Pedro has learned to embrace his identities, using them to empower others to face their own adversities. Pedro has volunteered his time to promote higher education to undocumented students, as he is a firm believer that knowledge is the key for upward mobility. Aside from his profession, Pedro is also a triathlon enthusiast. It is an activity that grounds him and connects him with his higher self. Since his personal life is as important to him as his professional life, Pedro enjoys spending time with his family and close friends. Their love is what motivates him to keep moving forward.

Set Hernandez, Director, Producer, Writer, Cinematographer, Editor *unseen*

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.

Day Al-Mohamed, Producer, *unseen*

Day Al-Mohamed is an author, filmmaker, and disability policy strategist. Her policy work has focused on marginalized and disenfranchised groups and includes a variety of legislative and programmatic projects including active roles in passage of the Affordable Care Act and the Hate Crimes Prevention Act; and efforts at the United Nations to address reparations for victims of genocide. Day is author of two novels and is a regular host on Idobi Radio's "Geek Girl Riot" with an audience of 80,000 listeners. Her documentary film, *The Invalid Corps*, a forgotten history about disabled Civil War soldier regiments, premiered on public television in 2020. She is the series creator, writer, and director of American Masters/PBS' series RENEGADES. Day is a Founding Member of [FWD-Doc \(Documentary Filmmakers with Disabilities\)](#), active in Women in Film and Video (WIFV), and recently joined the board of Docs in Progress. A skilled moderator, she presents often on the representation of disability in media, most recently at the National Bar Association, SXSW, and AFI. However, she is most proud of being invited to teach a workshop on storytelling at the White House in February 2016.

Félix Endara, Producer, *unseen*

Félix Endara is a bilingual creative professional from Guayaquil, Ecuador. He is based in New York City, where he works in private philanthropy and as an independent producer. He is a queer trans filmmaker who documents the preservation of LGBT historical spaces, champions activists who catalyze social change, and disrupts the insidious narratives that deny the humanity of marginalized communities. He has over 15 years of experience in filmmaking, philanthropy, and arts administration, collaborating with organizations that support multidisciplinary artists and organizations, including the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New Orleans Film Festival, and the Open Society Foundations. He was a fellow at the Gotham, formerly IFP, Documentary Finishing Lab (2010) as producer for *Wildness* (2012, Dir: Wu Tsang), which premiered at MoMA's Documentary Fortnight series in February 2012, was an official selection at SXSW, and screened at the Whitney Biennial later that year. He also produced [North By Current](#) (2021, Dir: Angelo Madsen Minax), which had its World Premiere at the Berlinale, North American premiere at Tribeca, and was broadcast as part of the POV series on PBS in late Fall 2021. Félix is Co-Chair of the Board of Working Films, an organization that brings together documentary filmmakers and grassroots activists to advance social justice.

Diane Quon, Executive Producer, *unseen*

Diane Quon is an Academy Award®-nominated producer who worked as a marketing executive in LA at NBC and at Paramount Pictures before moving back to her hometown of Chicago. Diane produced the documentaries: Oscar and Emmy nominated, Peabody and Sundance award-winning film, MINDING THE GAP (Hulu, POV); Oscar-shortlisted *Bad Axe* (IFCFilms); *AKA Mr. Chow* (HBO); *The Dilemma of Desire* (Showtime); Emmy-nominated *Finding YingYing* (MTVDocs); *For The Left Hand* (PBS); Emmy-nominated [Wuhan Wuhan](#) (POV), *Breaking the News* (Indie Lens) and *Surf Nation* (Mountainfilm Telluride 2022). She is producing the upcoming documentary *The Sam and Omar Project* and also developing a fiction film based on a New York Times best-seller. Diane is an AMPAS and PGA member, the recipient of the Cinereach Producer Award and is a Sundance Creative Producing Fellow and a Film Independent Fellow. She is the proud mother of four.

Dorian Gomez Pestaña, Co-Producer, *unseen*

Dorian Gomez Pestaña (she/they) is a Queer Mexican filmmaker, storyteller, and multidisciplinary artist raised in the South. She is a founding member of the [Undocumented Filmmakers Collective](#) and is passionate about stories that celebrate the immigrant experience and explore social justice issues. Some of her most recent work includes writing, directing, and producing the short film *Refugio* (2023). This film is about an immigrant family purchasing their first home in the US while navigating the

complex concept of home. In addition, her passion for sound has allowed her to work as a creative director and producer for the podcast *Nuestro South*. *Nuestro South* explores the Latine immigrant experience in the US South during the Jim Crow Era.

Daniel Chávez-Ontiveros, Editor, Writer, *unseen*

Daniel Chávez-Ontiveros is an award-winning Mexican filmmaker. He studied an MFA in Documentary Film at Stanford University. His thesis film *EL CISNE* (2016) was awarded the UNAFF Youth Vision Award and the Audience Award in the Program of Sexual Diversity at the Morelia International Film Festival FICM. He works as an editor in short and feature documentary films in the California Bay Area. He edited the HotDocs and Tribeca award-winning film '499' (dir. Rodrigo Reyes) and was nominated for "Best Editing in a Documentary Film" at the Tribeca Film Festival. He's also the editor of the ITVS funded film *Sanson and Me* (dir. Rodrigo Reyes) and *Sanctuary Rising* (dir. Theo Rigby & Florencia Krochink), films that are currently in the final stage of post-production. Daniel's also part of the production team in the limited series of *GROWING UP IN AMERICA: LIFE AFTER THE TALIBAN*, a project that was selected to participate in the 2021 Film Independent + CNN Original Docu-Series Intensive. Daniel is a co-director at Video Consortium México (VCMX), a non-profit organization that focuses on building community in the documentary scene in Mexico and promoting the work of emerging Mexican documentary filmmakers.

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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*, *Minding The Gap* and *Not Going Quietly*, 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 47 Emmy® Awards, 27 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 and follow [@povdocs](#) on social media.

About American Documentary, Inc.

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia organization 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 *Chasing the Dream* and *Peril and Promise* public media initiatives of The WNET Group, 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](#).

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