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TRUE/FALSE FILM FEST ANNOUNCES INAUGURAL CONFLUENCE FELLOWS

Columbia, Missouri — Ragtag Film Society is excited to launch the inaugural year of its Confluence Fellowship program during the 2023 True/False Film Fest. This new initiative brings together Midwest based filmmakers who are in development on their first feature-length nonfiction film to provide artist support at an early stage in the creative process, and centers Midwest filmmakers in order to uplift filmmaking voices from the region that True/False calls home. The 2023 Fellows will be joined by established international filmmakers and other industry experts for in-depth workshops, talks and screenings, as well as to enjoy camaraderie and professional engagement experiences over the course of the Fest. The fellowship aims to connect the projects and filmmakers with both the national and international industry for inspiration and collaboration.

Chloé Trayner, Artistic Director, said “Our inaugural cohort of Confluence Fellows all demonstrate commitment to using the nonfiction form to share unheard stories with the wider world and we’re excited to work with these filmmakers to support them in realizing their creative visions. The filmmakers may all be based in the Midwest but these projects have the potential to reach audiences far and wide with their personal, political, and deeply human stories.”

Beyond the weekend of True/False, Confluence Fellows will continue to share creative challenges and solutions and develop industry touchpoints throughout the year via regular facilitated check-ins. For this program, True/False includes the following states in its definition of the Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The 2023 cohort represents Missouri, Minnesota, and Iowa.

2023 Confluence Fellows and Projects

Erin Semine Kökdil | *Untitled Santa Cruz Chinautla Documentary*

The indigenous Maya Poqomam community of Santa Cruz Chinautla, Guatemala is facing an eco-ethnocide. Illegal and invasive sand mining companies combined with uncontrolled garbage overflow from a nearby landfill present a dual-environmental crisis that’s reached a tipping point. Determined to take back their community, the people rise up in a pacific resistance to protect their land before it’s too late.

Erin Semine Kökdil is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and educator interested in building solidarity and inciting social change through film. Her work explores issues of home, identity, motherhood, migration, and belonging, and has screened at IDFA, Hot Docs, Camden International Film Festival, San Francisco International Film Festival, AFI Docs, Palm Springs International ShortFest, among others. Her work has been supported by SFFILM, National Geographic, Points North Institute, Mountainfilm and

Fulbright, and featured on The New Yorker, KQED, and Means TV. Prior to becoming a filmmaker, she worked extensively with non-profits and community-led initiatives in the U.S. and Guatemala. She holds a BA in Latin American Studies and Spanish from Smith College and an MFA in Documentary Film and Video from Stanford University. She is the recipient of a 2020 Fulbright-National Geographic Storytelling Fellowship.

Desireé Moore | *Work in Progress*

Denied the space to simply grieve, director Desireé Moore becomes a modern, mad scientist driven to reanimate the technological remains of her deceased lover.

Desireé Moore is a time-based artist whose work stretches storytelling constructs through the use of media technologies. Her work is rooted in observation aimed at understanding the magical fallibility of memory and individual behavioral responses to social influence around themes of gender and loss. Currently based in Columbia, MO, she works as an Assistant Professor at the University of Missouri.

Moore recently participated in UnionDocs Documentary Lab in Brooklyn, NY. Her collaborative and video work has been hosted internationally at venues like The Momentary, FotoFocus Biennial, Aesthetica Film Festival, Borscht Film Festival, The Armory Show, Pratt Institute, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, the New Art Center, among others.

Tommy Franklin | *You Don't Know My Name*

After being separated from his incarcerated mother at birth, Tommy Franklin searches for her identity while uncovering deep ancestral bloodlines. As he gets closer to this life-altering truth, he must navigate his way through systems designed to keep him in the dark.

Tommy Franklin is a filmmaker, writer, producer, creator of Weapon of Choice Podcast and Special Menu Productions. Tommy is a 2020 Sundance Short Documentary Film Fund Grantee, 2020 Kartemquin Diverse Voices in Docs Fellow, 2020 SPNN New Angle Docu Fellow, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council 2020 Next Step Awardee, a 2021 Jerome Foundation Film Production Grantee, and was a finalist for the 2021 Sundance Episodic Lab. He was a 2022 Sundance BIPOC Mentorship Program Mentee and a 2022 Film Independent + CNN Original Series Docuseries Intensive Fellow. Tommy was a founding board member of All Square, is a founding board member of the Ostara Initiative, and is a creative and communications consultant at the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI). He made three off-the-wall narrative short films, and he collaborates in philanthropic and grassroots organizing communities to produce nonfiction content he believes in, indiscriminate in form or medium. A survivor of incarceration (born in prison and having served time in adulthood), Franklin works along creative culture lines to radically reimagine power structures, focusing on Black liberation.

Joua Lee Grande | *Spirited*

Like many young Hmong Americans, a filmmaker searches to reconnect with her community's shamanic traditions while working to build connections across racial, cultural and generational lines. As an agnostic woman chosen to become a shaman, she must determine whether or not she will follow the path and whether or not she has a choice.

Joua Lee Grande's work highlights marginalized voices and undertold stories. Her films have been supported by Kartemquin Films, Jerome Foundation, Center for Asian American Media and more. Her

short On All Fronts received an Honorable Mention for CAAMFest's Loni Ding Award for Social Justice Documentary. She is a Confluence Fellow (2023) and Jerome Artist Fellow (2021-23). Jousa was previously an editor for television news and a community worker supporting marginalized storytellers and families in nonprofits.

The 20th True/False Film Fest, a project of Ragtag Film Society, will take place March 2-5, 2023, in downtown Columbia, Missouri. For more information, please visit truefalse.org.

With cinema as a focal point, Ragtag Film Society exists to captivate and engage communities in immersive arts experiences that explore assumptions and elicit shared joy, wonder, and introspection.

For more information, contact:

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