



PERSPECTIVE
FUND

NEW PERSPECTIVES 2021

FELLOWS ANNOUNCED!

Doc Society Announces New Perspectives Fellowship and Threshold Fund Grantees, centering creative freedom as a form of justice

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Doc Society announced today their cohort New Perspectives fellows and the latest recipients of their partnership with the Threshold Foundations High Impact Documentary Films Circle. The New Perspectives fellowship, in partnership with Perspective Fund, aims to empower filmmakers to have access to full creative expression and follow their most ambitious dreams, understanding that not everyone has been given an equal chance to tell the stories they want, and that this creative freedom is a form of justice in and of itself. The fellowship reflects a pivot in granting. Previously the initiative supplied non-recoupable support to non-fiction feature films in early development; this year Doc Society and Perspective are, in addition to the non-recoupable grant, creating a two year fellowship for the four selected projects.

To date, New Perspectives fund has granted over \$350,000 to 17 projects over the past three years with an emphasis on supporting filmmakers from underrepresented communities. This shift to a two year fellowship aims to deepen support for each member of the cohort, diving into issue areas that are bespoke to the group and giving space for the filmmakers to explore both their films and careers. Producers are included alongside Directors in the cohort, and the fellowship is focused on peer-based learning alongside highly curated guidance from industry experts.

“The mission of New Perspectives rings loud and clear in each of the projects - elevating filmmakers as artists, deconstructing our understanding of documentary and rebuilding it anew. From innovating new ways of making that integrate accessibility to co-creating with participants, we’re inspired by this cohort’s commitment to decolonizing documentary practices. Co-creation is at the top of mind for Doc Society, too, as we craft the fellowship in

response to the needs of our fellows,” said Shanida Scotland, newly appointed Director at Doc Society. “We want to thank Perspective for making this support possible.”

“I am so moved that Doc Society chose to support me and this project. Given what your grant is all about and that you chose our strange little film, makes me feel seen in a deep way. For much of this project, I felt like I was on the end of a diving board suspended from a hot air balloon. Certitude for where we end up or may land has been elusive, which is part of what makes this work fulfilling. Thank you for seeing what we’re trying to do, looking deeply into the strata of our endeavor, and taking a chance on us,” said filmmaker Eddie Martinez.

“I have been working on this film with the protagonist Pedro since 2016, and it often feels like an endless journey full of rejection. Thank you for the encouragement by placing your trust into our project through this grant. I am truly so grateful,” said filmmaker Set Hernandez Rongkilyo.

Doc Society’s partnership with the Threshold Foundation’s High Impact Documentary Circle has supported 30 films with over \$1.2million in grants over the last 6 years. The fund aims to bolster filmmakers, stories and films to create lasting positive impact and societal change. Previously supported films include RaMell Ross’ *Hale County; This Morning This Evening*, Rachel Lears’ *Knock Down the House* and Ted Passon, Yoni Brook and Nicole Salazar’s *Philly DA*. This year, the fund granted a total of \$165,000 to five projects in varying stages from development through post production.

Both funds provide critical support for filmmakers who are taking artistic risks, following pressing and timely stories, centering nuance and innovation, and sparking cultural change.

NEW PERSPECTIVES GRANTEES

Bimshire

Director: Jason Fitzroy Jeffers

Bimshire is a deeply personal and spiritual investigation into the legacy of Barbados, one of the most visited tourist destinations in the Caribbean and also the historical birthplace of the plantation-based economy, making it one of the key progenitors of white supremacy in the Americas.

River of Grass

Director: Sasha Wortzel

Producer: Danielle Varga

River of Grass brings audiences on a journey through the past, present, and precarious future of the Florida Everglades, an imperiled and iconic American region on the verge of collapse. Reimagining Marjory Stoneman Douglas’s groundbreaking non-fiction book “The Everglades: River of Grass,” the film weaves history and contemporary stories with evocative landscapes to explore how the state’s ecological crisis is rooted in ongoing legacies of settler colonialism.

The Monster and the Storm

Director: Eddie Martinez

Producer: Jamie Gonçalves

The Monster and the Storm is a feature-length documentary fantasy set in Puerto Rico. After a storm hits the island, a local cosplayer tries to reconcile the loss of his long-dead father by becoming the creature he dresses up as, Godzilla.

unseen

Director: Set Hernandez Rongkilyo

Producers: Diane Quon, Day Al-Mohamed

unseen is a multi-platform documentary that follows the story of Pedro, an aspiring social worker who happens to be a blind, undocumented immigrant. Through diegetic sound and experimental cinematography, this “audio-based” film reimagines the accessibility of cinema for audiences that cannot see, while exploring the intersections of immigration, disability, and mental health. Beyond the film, the project also has an “audio play” and immersive VR component, in order for it to be as accessible as possible to audiences with disabilities.

THRESHOLD FOUNDATION HIGH IMPACT DOCUMENTARY CIRCLE

Dystopia

Director: Petra Costa

Producer: Alessandra Orofino

Dystopia follows what happens when a democracy falls from the edge. It investigates how an extremely religious and increasingly fundamentalist nation copes with leadership that is essentially anti-State during the Coronavirus pandemic. As we follow Igor, an evangelical pastor in a favela, and a range of other characters including doctors, nurses, and other religious leaders, we discover a country divided by a Holy War - with conflicting visions of faith, science, power and solidarity.

After Sherman

Director: Jon-Sesrie Goff

Producers: blair dorosh-walther, Madeleine Hunt-Ehrlich

I inherited a plot of land off the Santee River and began traveling home to make a film about it, reconnecting with my father who is in the leadership of the A.M.E church in South Carolina. The film I'd set out to make was violently interrupted by the murder of nine people at my parent's church, Mother Emanuel in 2015. My relationship with my father is at the heart of the film that unfolds, now as I follow him serving as interim pastor in the aftermath of the murders. This is a story of American inheritance.

Seeds

Director: Brittany Shyne

Producer: Danielle Varga

Seeds is a portrait of a 138 year-old African-American centennial farm in Thomasville, Georgia. Using lyrical black and white imagery this meditative film examines the decline of generational black farmers and the significance of owning land in the rural south.

Hummingbirds

Directors: Silvia Castaños, Estefanía Contreras, Miguel Drake-McLaughlin, Diane Ng, Ana Rodriguez-Falco, Jillian Schlesinger

Producers: Leslie Benavides, Miguel Drake-McLaughlin, Ana Rodriguez-Falco, Jillian Schlesinger

In this uniquely collaborative coming-of-age film, inseparable best friends Silvia and Beba emerge at night to escape the cruel summer heat of their Texas border town, wandering empty streets in search of inspiration, adventure, and a sense of belonging. When forces beyond their control threaten their shared dreams and they are faced with an uncertain future, they take a stand and hold onto what they can—the moment and each other.

This Is How It Ends (working title)

Director: Ramona Diaz

A film about an epic battle for the soul of a nation. In a world of disinformation, weaponized social media platforms, and a raging pandemic that can't seem to be tamed, will radical love win the day?