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Contact: Sara Archambault | 617.492.5333 | sara@lef-foundation.org

LEF Moving Image Fund Awards Summer 2018 Pre-Production Grants to New England Independent Documentary Filmmakers

The LEF Foundation has just announced **6 grants totaling \$30,000** in pre-production funding to projects directed or produced by New England-based independent documentary filmmakers.

The LEF Moving Image Fund invests in innovative feature-length documentary films that demonstrate excellence in technique, strong storytelling ability, and originality of artistic vision and voice.

“We are thrilled to be supporting such a varied and ambitious group of documentary projects in this round,” said LEF Executive Director Lyda Kuth. “We continue to admire and support the artful talent and spirit of experimentation in non-fiction storytelling that exists across the New England filmmaking community.

“We deeply appreciate the opportunity to review all of the proposed projects that approached us at this early stage. We are pleased to be offering initial support to this newest round of grantees, and we look forward to staying in touch with all of our applicants about the continued development of their work.”

The directors awarded grants in this round include both first-time and returning LEF grantees. These filmmakers are pursuing stories throughout the United States and around the world, from the studios of Soviet animators before and after capitalism, to an internationally diverse group of dancers interpreting an ancient Sufi poem; from a family’s exploration of masculinity and transgender adolescence, to a community portrait made in collaboration with the residents of a small Midwestern town; from the perspectives of 11 female priests who defied the Episcopal Church, to the experiences of two athletes challenging heterosexual norms in the world of professional ice skating. Artistically, these grantees also take on a variety of approaches to the documentary form, including projects that are character-driven, observational, personal, immersive, participatory, and archival.

Summer 2018 LEF Moving Image Fund Pre-Production Grantees



The Good Studio: Soyuzmultfilm (wt) (\$5,000)

Ethan Bien (Director and Producer)

The Soviet Union's animation program was a state arts project on an unimaginably massive scale and produced some of the world's most enduring animated art. It remains a valuable reminder of what magic can happen when art is deemed a worthwhile investment of taxpayer dollars. Now Vladimir Putin's administration has relaunched Soyuzmultfilm, resurrecting Soviet characters and storylines, but can this deeply Soviet project be successfully transplanted to hyper-capitalist Russia?



Conference of the Birds (\$5,000)

Bijoyini Chatterjee (Director)

Wendy Jehlen (Producer)

Eight dancers from diverse cultures around the world gather in Boston and embark on a unique journey to reinterpret a beloved 12th century Sufi poem, "Conference of the Birds". The film follows the journey of the dancers as they learn to be different together and merge their artistic voices through an Islamic text, motifs and symbols.



Untitled LGBTQ Ice Skating Documentary (\$5,000)

Marlo Poras (Director and Producer)

Jocelyn Glatzer (Director and Producer)

An intimate, behind-the-scenes exploration of gender and sexuality in the professional ice skating world told through the lives of Joel Dear and Christian Erwin - two openly gay ice dancers who are upending the idealized, heterosexual foundations of their sport with a duet performed between two men.



The Philadelphia Eleven (\$5,000)

Margo Guernsey (Director and Producer)

Nikki Bramley (Co-Producer)

On July 29, 1974 eleven women were ordained as Episcopal priests in direct opposition to the Church. What should have been a very personal journey of faith became a media frenzy. The women found themselves leading the charge for ordination of women in the center of an international firestorm about who speaks the word of God.



Adam's Apple (\$5,000)

Amy Jenkins (Director)

ADAM'S APPLE is a divergent coming-of-age documentary from the perspectives of director Amy Jenkins and her teenage transgender son, Adam. Collaboratively they will trace the transition of Adam from pre-pubescent Audrey to evolving-young-man Adam in an exploration of what characterizes "maleness" for today's gender-redefining youth.



Untitled (\$5,000)

J.P. Sniadecki and Lisa Malloy (Directors)

Edward Wong (Producer)

When a total solar eclipse passes overhead "Little Egypt", the celestial phenomenon spurs a collaboration between residents of Cairo, IL, and filmmakers to craft a collage of vignettes that defy the misperception of Cairo as a "dying community" eclipsed by post-industrialism. Despite economic hardship and a history of racial injustice, this film celebrates a vibrant community and its path towards resurgence.

In addition to this group of grantees, LEF will award another \$190,000 to films in the production and post-production stages later in the year. **In total, LEF will be distributing \$220,000 in funding to documentary production over the course of its 2019 fiscal year.**

The next grant deadline is **25 January 2019** for projects seeking production or post-production support. Please check www.lef-foundation.org for details regarding LEF Moving Image Fund guidelines and eligibility. For more information on the Foundation or its funded projects, please contact Program Director Sara Archambault: 617.492.5333 or sara@lef-foundation.org.

LEF extends its warmest congratulations to this group of grantees and best wishes for success to all of the projects reviewed for this deadline.

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