

LEF Foundation Announces \$205,000 in Production and Post-production Grants to New England Documentary Filmmakers

LEF and the Harvard Film Study Center have also announced that Amy Jenkins has been awarded the FSC-LEF Fellowship for 2022-23.

The LEF Foundation has awarded **11 Moving Image Fund grants totaling \$205,000** in support of feature-length documentary works by New England-based filmmakers.

The [LEF Moving Image Fund](#) invests in feature-length documentary films that demonstrate excellence in technique, strong storytelling ability, and originality of artistic vision and voice. The most recent round of awards includes **seven grants of \$15,000 to projects at the Production stage** and **four grants of \$25,000 to projects at the Post-production stage**.

This year's selected films represent a chorus of perspectives questioning how best to celebrate, conserve, and connect with the past and present while forging ahead into an unwritten future.

"It's moving to see the diversity of work being made by independent documentary filmmakers in the region," said Lyda Kuth, Executive Director. **"This year we saw themes of legacy, community, and transformation dealt with through a range of films, some of which address environmentalism, disability, public education, and even wastewater treatment."**

At LEF's January 2022 deadline for Production and Post-production, 67 eligible letters of inquiry were evaluated by a group of three New England-based filmmakers serving as peer readers, in addition to LEF staff.

"This opportunity for local filmmakers to engage with the work being made by their colleagues is both inspiring and builds a sense of community that LEF looks to play a role in creating," said Kuth.

Of these initial inquiries, 28 projects that most aligned with LEF's funding criteria were invited by LEF staff to submit a full application, including 17 finalists in Production and 11 finalists in Post-production. All 28 full applications were then evaluated by a peer review panel made up of filmmakers and professionals from across the U.S. who

represent a diversity of perspectives on documentary. Peer reviewers remain anonymous and change at every round. While LEF has typically convened each year's Moving Image Fund panelists for an in-person review meeting each May, LEF hosted an all-virtual panel review process for a third consecutive year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We were honored to learn about every project shared with LEF during this spring grant cycle, and to invite feedback from a group of thoughtful and talented peer reviewers at both the letter of inquiry stage and the full application stage," said LEF Program Director Gen Carmel. **"We will make that feedback available for applicants to hear by phone, and we hope that all of the filmmakers who applied might take advantage of this opportunity to receive in-kind support for their works-in-progress, regardless of the grant decision."**

In addition to this group of grantees, [LEF also awarded \\$47,500 to 12 projects in Early Development and Pre-production](#) earlier in the fiscal year. **In total, LEF will be distributing \$252,500 in funding to documentary productions over the course of its 2021-22 fiscal year.**

See the attached list of grantees.

For filmmaker bios, see LEF's [Moving Image Fund Grant Directory](#).

Additionally, earlier today, LEF joined the Harvard Film Study Center in announcing that [Amy Jenkins has been selected as the 2022-23 recipient of the Film Study Center-LEF Foundation Fellowship](#) with her project "Adam's Apple." The FSC-LEF Fellowship, open to Boston-area nonfiction directors who are not currently affiliated with Harvard, aims to foster connections between Harvard filmmakers and those in the surrounding filmmaker community. One filmmaker per academic year receives a \$10,000 grant (jointly funded by FSC and LEF Foundation), access to FSC production and post-production equipment, and the opportunity to participate in the Harvard FSC community through work-in-progress screenings, workshops, and other activities. Fellowship applications are accepted in the January round of the LEF Moving Image Fund Production and Post-production grant cycle and the final recipient of the FSC-LEF Fellowship is selected by the Film Study Center. [See the full announcement here.](#)

The next Moving Image Fund grant deadline is **Friday, June 3, 2022** for New England-based directors and producers seeking Pre-production and Early Development support for feature-length documentaries. Please check [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 Officer Matthew LaPaglia at matthew@lef-foundation.org.

Spring 2022 LEF Moving Image Fund Grantees

PRODUCTION (\$15,000)



COSMIC CODA

Directed & Produced by Mary-Jane Doherty (MA)

Sometimes you have to be patient. COSMIC CODA begins in 1985, when a group of MIT astrophysicists—obscure nobodies—look for gravitational waves. The payoff comes eventually, it just takes a while. Say, 37 years. And that payoff provokes the beginning of yet another story: it seems the men got the ball rolling but it's the women who are kicking it over the line.



Kaksori!

Directed by Shirley Kim-Ryu (MA) and Eben Portnoy (MA)

Produced by Shirley Kim-Ryu, Eben Portnoy, & Marcela Santibañez

Kaksori! plunges viewers into the giddy revival of an ancient South Korean street-culture that rips through class and gender boundaries to heal collective trauma. The film follows three performers across a transformed rural landscape as they struggle to release the suppressed soul of a country.



King Luck

Directed by Emily Graham-Handley (MA)

Produced by Emily Graham-Handley & Tom Donahue

When the unsung pioneer of the American beatbox movement is diagnosed with cancer, he must reconnect with the community he built to save his life and legacy.



My Disability Roadmap

Directed by Dan Habib (NH) & Samuel Habib (NH)

Produced by Dan Habib

Samuel Habib, 21, wants to date, leave home, go to college. But he drives a 350-pound wheelchair, uses a communication device, and can have a seizure at any moment. Determined to find his path forward, he seeks out guidance from America's most rebellious disability activists. Will they empower him to launch the bold adult life he craves?



Requiem for a River

Directed by Mary Patierno (MA)

Produced by Mary Patierno & Hugo Pérez

Requiem for a River explores the New Mexico stretch of the Rio Grande, an iconic but endangered American waterway, in a time of climate change and calls for environmental justice. Rooted in history, indigeneity and the land, Requiem for a River examines the ecological, cultural and spiritual significance of the Rio Grande – as well as the environmental and human costs of the twentieth-century effort to harness, control and divide the rivers of the West for agricultural and municipal growth. Through lyrical imagery and in-depth interviews with a diverse range of residents, Native, Latino, Indo-Hispanic and Anglo, this visually poetic documentary reveals the once-mighty river's role as a lifeline in the desert and asks whether the keys to a more sustainable, equitable future lie in New Mexico's ancient past.



The Source of Life (Te Puna Ora)

Directed by Virginie Tetoofa

Produced by Kiran Jandu (MA), Riham Ezzaldeen, & Ciara Lacy

As the climate crisis threatens Tahiti, an alliance of women embarks on a sacred journey to protect their island home.



Untitled Wastewater Documentary

Directed by Kaitlyn Schwalje (ME) & Alex Wolf

Lewis (ME)

Produced by Rebecca Stern & Justin Levy

As America's aging wastewater systems begin to fail, one plant does all it can to stay afloat. Chief Operator, Dustin Price, together with his dedicated team, battle aging infrastructure, climate change and an odor-averse public to keep Portland, Maine healthy.

POST-PRODUCTION (\$25,000)



Adam's Apple

Directed by Amy Jenkins (NH)

ADAM'S APPLE is an intimate exploration of what characterizes "maleness" for today's gender-redefining youth, filmed from the perspectives of Director Amy Jenkins and her teenage transgender son, Adam, each with a camera in hand. Vérité and artistic imagery chronicle the evolution of Adam's identity beginning at toddlerhood, unveiling the ever-shifting family dynamic as Adam charts his path toward manhood.



Cairo, IL Project (working title)

Directed by Lisa Marie Malloy, JP Sniadecki, Ray Whitaker

Produced by Karin Chien & Wynne Hannan (ME)

Cairo, IL Project offers a collective and cinematic portrait of the much-maligned town of Cairo, IL, a former industrial and agricultural empire at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Through intimate depictions created with Cairoite collaborators, the film celebrates the town's vibrant community spirit and its attempts at resurgence in defiance of economic hardship, racial injustice, and negative perceptions.



Israelism

Directed by Eric Axelman (MA) & Sam Eilertsen (RI)

Produced by Eric Axelman & Daniel Chalfen

Two young American Jews are raised to defend the state of Israel at all costs. One joins the Israeli military, while the other supports Israel on "the other battlefield", America's college campuses. When both see the scope of Israel's mistreatment of the Palestinian people with their own eyes, they are horrified and heartbroken, as they ultimately both help form and lead a new movement of American Jews who, in solidarity and partnership with the Palestinians, fight to end Israel's occupation.



School District

Directed by Leigh Morfoot (CT) & Jason Morfoot (CT)

Produced by Leigh Morfoot

Filmed fly-on-the-wall throughout the 2020-2021 academic year, School District plunges into Connecticut's Stamford Public Schools observing what it takes to meet the diverse

educational needs of 17,000+ students... under the most extreme circumstances. More than a documentary about pandemic education, School District testifies to Stamford's ongoing work of desegregation (and peers toward the possibility of a truly integrated future). It is a poignant reminder of the fundamental role public education plays in our society that looks toward a more grounded and informed dialogue about America's schools.

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