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LEF Moving Image Fund Awards Summer 2017 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 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.

“As a small family foundation and as a local funder,” said LEF Executive Director Lyda Kuth, “the pre-production stage is a critical point at which to invest in the process of story development and artistic experimentation, and to encourage future support from other funders. Our hope is that these grants help each team accomplish some of their initial goals, like travel, research, and discovering the look and feel of the film.”

The directors awarded grants in this round include both first-time and returning LEF grantees. These filmmakers are pursuing subject matter throughout the United States and around the world, from Turkey to the Rio Grande, from Michigan to South Carolina, and close to home in New England. Additionally, these grantees take on a variety of approaches to the documentary form, including projects that are character-driven, observational, personal, immersive, participatory, and archival.

Summer 2017 LEF Moving Image Fund Pre-Production Grantees



Beyza Boyacioglu – *A Prince from Outer Space: Zeki Müren (\$5,000)*

Modern Turkey’s greatest pop star, the legendary queer musician Zeki Müren, holds a mirror up to his country—during his lifetime and long after his death. *A PRINCE FROM OUTER SPACE* follows the pop star’s story from his radio era, to the cinema, nightclub, and television years, and during the posthumous revival of his image. While exploring Müren’s media genius, and unpacking his multifaceted star image and his mythology, the documentary also offers insight on the complexities of Turkey’s past and present.



Allison Cekala – *The End of the River (wt)* (\$5,000)

THE END OF THE RIVER (working title) follows the Rio Grande River from its headwaters in southern Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico. Through overuse, poor water management, damming, and dredging, the river scarcely meets the ocean. The film, told through a visual narrative, explores the river in its current state, examining human impacts and traversing the site for a potential border wall on the 889 mile stretch of river that is the geographic boundary between the U.S. and Mexico.



Diane Hendrix – *Mi Casita, the Documentary* (\$5,000)

Franallen Acosta, a young Dominican American community organizer and entrepreneur, is betting his life on visionary solutions to the housing crisis in his distressed hometown of Lawrence, MA – “the immigrant city.” His design team will cultivate urban gardens around affordable eco-housing built from shipping containers. Monthly costs for these homes are expected to be half the cost of current rentals. Fran has assembled a stellar team and mentors for Mi Casita, but could the rigors of business development, his run for City Council or his management style jeopardize Fran's future?



Elise Hugus & Daniel Cojanu – *The Weir* (\$5,000)

A Cape Cod fisher family struggles with shifting environmental and economic conditions as a father passes his weir business on to his daughter. In this verité exploration of sustainability and identity, THE WEIR examines a fishing family's future – and by extension, Cape Cod's fishing heritage. Will this dying tradition survive, or has it become a trap for the next generation?



Madsen Minax – *At the River* (\$5,000)

AT THE RIVER traces, first person, the filmmaker's relationship with his family following his niece's unexplained death, his brother-in-law's false incarceration for her murder, and the family's turn to Mormonism. Through narrative means, landscape meditation and spoken essay, the film poetically investigates a convergence of themes: the prison industrial complex, rural livelihood, religiosity, trans identity, death, and family bonds.



Garrett Zevgetis – *Disturbing Schools* (\$5,000)

After two South Carolina teenage girls are arrested by a popular police officer in their high school classroom, controversial cell-phone videos of the incident go viral. Pandora's box bursts open as debates swirl around race, gender, and a mysterious law named “Disturbing Schools” which impacts thousands of kids every year. A life-changing ripple effect emerges from a single explosive day.

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 2018 fiscal year.**

The next grant deadline is **26 January 2018** 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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