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## **LEF Moving Image Fund Awards Summer 2019 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 very excited to support these six documentary projects in pre-production,” said LEF Executive Director Lyda Kuth. “We know that early support can be difficult to find, and that this funding comes at a crucial time when filmmakers are still honing their visions for their projects.”

“We are honored to play a small part in supporting this newest round of grantees, and we look forward to staying in touch with all of the filmmakers who submitted applications in this round about the continued development of their work.”

The directors awarded grants in this round are all first-time LEF grantees. These filmmakers are pursuing projects throughout the United States and around the world about a variety of subjects, from a turning point in life of a young and thriving Guatemalan fashion designer with Down Syndrome, to an investigation into the anonymous individuals buried in the Metfern Cemetery in Waltham, Massachusetts; from an intimate and intense portrait of a Maine couple’s earliest days of parenthood, to an observational account of three Boston-area barbershops and beauty salons that form vital gathering spaces for Black residents in the face of gentrification; from a personal documentary that seeks to reconcile the life and legacy of the filmmaker’s absent artist father, to a decentralized interrogation of Amazon’s pervasive reach into our everyday lives. Artistically, these grantees also take on a variety of approaches to the documentary form, including projects that are character-driven, observational, personal, immersive, user-generated, and archival.

## Summer 2019 LEF Moving Image Fund Pre-Production Grantees



### ***Inherited (\$5,000)***

**Jessie Beers-Altman (Director)**

When artist Harold Altman died in 2003, he left behind an estate consisting of more than 200,000 pieces of artwork. Now, 15 years later, his daughter is faced with the task of figuring out what to do with it all. Part-historical, part-personal, this story will follow her as she veers off-course and interrupts her life to time-travel through 80 years of her father's complicated, celebrated, and tumultuous life in an attempt to reconcile the man he was with the legacy he left behind.



### ***The Fate of Human Beings (\$5,000)***

**Heather Cassano (Director and Producer)**

*The Fate of Human Beings* uncovers the stories of 310 people buried in unnamed graves in Metfern Cemetery, patients who suffered abuses in two nearby mental institutions. Through archival and present-day material, the film explores the depersonalization of disabled people and the collective memory of mental institutions in Massachusetts.



### ***Black Barbershops and Salons: A Neighborhood Oasis (\$5,000)***

**Rudy Hypolite (Director and Producer)**

This feature-length documentary film will explore the microcosm of black barbershops and hair salons in the demographically changing Boston neighborhoods of Roxbury and Jamaica Plain and the suburban town of Stoughton, MA, juxtaposing the shops' immensely important role in their communities with the dynamic, economic changes that are redefining the nature of those communities. Through a cinema vérité filming approach, the film will delve into interpersonal relationships as well as broader social issues affecting the shops and their patrons.

### ***Amazon is the Future (\$5,000)***

**Mary Jirmanus Saba (Director and Producer)**

Uniting user-generated content from across the internet with observation of the company's various key production sites, **AMAZON IS THE FUTURE** spatializes the ways Amazon's model transforms our economy, our cities, and our everyday lives.

***No One Told Me (\$5,000)***

**Zulilah Merry (Director)**



No One Told Me is a cinéma vérité style documentary about postpartum, inspired by the filmmaker's own experience of being utterly unprepared for what happens after giving birth. The film follows first time parents Elise and Marc as they welcome their baby into the world. Their day to day experiences reveal the underlying story of the deeply personal and vulnerable transition into motherhood.



***Down with X (\$5,000)***

**Meghan Shea (Director and Producer)**

Down with X follows the journey of Isabella Springmühl, a Guatemalan fashion designer with Down Syndrome. With designs that are a contemporary take on traditional local styles, she has started to turn heads in the international fashion world. Named one of BBC's '100 Women' she has become a leading voice on inclusive design and slow fashion. This documentary follows her personal and professional life as she builds her fashion brand, purses personal artistic independence, and dates her boyfriend Jose, all while trying to maintain her health and wellbeing as a young woman with Down Syndrome.

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 2020 fiscal year.**

The next grant deadline is **31 January 2020** for projects seeking production or post-production support. Please check [www.lef-foundation.org](http://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 Officer Genevieve Carmel at 617.492.5333 or [gen@lef-foundation.org](mailto:gen@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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