

HAMPTONS FILM

HAMPTONSFILM ANNOUNCES SELECTED SCREENWRITERS, SCREENPLAYS & MENTORS FOR 24th EDITION OF THE SCREENWRITERS LAB

**Mentors Include Award-Winning Filmmakers Celine Song (PAST LIVES),
Mike Covino (THE CLIMB), and Bart Freundlich (THE MYTH OF FINGERPRINTS)**

Lab to Take Place April 5-7, 2024

East Hampton, NY (March 19, 2024) – HamptonsFilm, home of Hamptons International Film Festival, announced today the selected fellows, screenplays and mentors for the 24th edition of their annual Screenwriters Lab, which will take place April 5-7, 2024.

The three selected screenplays for 2024's Lab are "Pygmalion" by **Agnes Skonare**, "Little Phnom Penh" by **Chheangkea**, and "Diary of a Muslim Cynic" by **Sarah Mokh**. The Lab pairs rising screenwriters with established screenwriters, directors, and creative-producers for a weekend of one-on-one mentoring sessions.

"In considering selections from this year's record number of submissions, these three projects really stood out with their distinctive voices and unique approaches to storytelling. We are also honored to have three artists who have all exhibited work at our festival return to mentor these emerging artists," stated Artistic Director David Nugent.

This year's mentors include filmmaker and actor **Mike Covino**, whose work includes his feature directorial debut THE CLIMB, which premiered at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for Best First Feature at the 2020 Film Independent Spirit Awards; director, screenwriter and producer **Bart Freundlich**; known for his 1997 Sundance Film Festival hit THE MYTH OF FINGERPRINTS, starring Julianne Moore; and Academy Award-nominated screenwriter and filmmaker **Celine Song**, whose critically-acclaimed feature directorial debut PAST LIVES was nominated for Best Picture and Best Original Screenplay at the 96th Academy Awards. Song is an alumni of the Hamptons International Film Festival and was awarded the festival's Breakthrough Artist Award at the 31st edition in October 2023.

HamptonsFilm will also present one of the participating screenplays with the 2024 Melissa Mathison Award. The award was established in 2016 and named for the late, beloved Oscar®-nominated screenwriter, and strives to foster the continued development of female writers in the industry. Previous recipients include **Shehrezad Maher's "Theory of Colors," Farida Zahran's "The Leftover Ladies," Lana Wilson's "Back Seat," Kelly O'Sullivan's "Mouse," Kirsten Tan's "Higher," Aemilia Scott's "The Birthday Suit," Annabelle Attanasio's "Mickey And The Bear," and Cathy Yan's "Dead Pigs."** The 2024 Melissa Mathison Award recipient will be announced at an upcoming date and will receive access to a casting director and a staged reading of their project in New York City. To support women in film, please donate to the Melissa Mathison Award here: <https://bit.ly/mathisondonate>.

Highlights of the Screenwriters Lab over the past 24 years have included Anu Valia's WE STRANGERS, starring Kirby and Maria Dizzia, which recently premiered at the 2024 SXSW Film Festival; Andrew Semans' RESURRECTION, starring Rebecca Hall and Tim Roth, which premiered at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival; Michael Tyburski and Ben Nabors' THE SOUND OF SILENCE, starring Peter Sarsgaard and Rashida Jones, which premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival; Ísold Uggadóttir's AND BREATHE

NORMALLY and Christina Choe's NANCY, which both premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival and received awards for directing and screenwriting, respectively; Destin Daniel Cretton's SHORT TERM 12, starring Academy Award®-winning actors Brie Larson and Rami Malek, which won the Grand Jury and Audience Awards at SXSW in 2013; and Sara Colangelo's LITTLE ACCIDENTS, which premiered at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival, starring Elizabeth Banks and Chloe Sevigny.

Photos of this year's mentors and participants are available [here](#). For more information on this program, please visit the [HamptonsFilm website](#). Additional information on HamptonsFilm's year-round programming, including the upcoming 16th annual SummerDocs documentary showcase, and the Summer Outdoor Screening Series, will be announced at a later date. As previously announced, the 32nd annual Hamptons International Film Festival will take place as an expanded, eleven-day event from October 4-14, 2024.

SCREENPLAYS

"Pygmalion" by Agnes Skonare

Logline: When a successful New Yorker in pregnancy denial joins her partner's family for the holidays, a fateful accident offsets a dangerous game of blame and control, ultimately forcing her to reckon with her own desires for motherhood.

Bio: A Swedish writer/director based in LA., Agnes graduated with Honors from Columbia University where she was a scholarship recipient and writing/directing fellow. Agnes works on fiction films that explore the intricacies of the human experience, often exploring characters trapped in claustrophobic situations or relationships. Her short BERRY PICKERS was awarded The Adrienne Shelly Award for Best Female Director, the University Short Film Award at Hamptons International Film Festival, screened Telluride, was awarded a Vimeo Staff Pick Premiere and was shortlisted for a Guldbagge Nomination, the Swedish equivalent of the Academy Awards. The short is a pilot for her feature, which was the 2022 Winner of the BlueCat Screenplay Competition and selected for the Cine Qua Non Script Revision Lab. Her latest short, FAVOURS, starring Garance Marillier, was the 2023 Winner of the Tony Cox Screenplay Competition and premiered as part of the Best Shorts Program at the Gothenburg Film Festival in Jan 2024. She is the recipient of SWEA Los Angeles Film and Culture Scholarship for 2023, is a 2023 Vimeo Breakout Creator and is currently working on her first feature film with the acclaimed Swedish production company PINE.

"Little Phnom Penh" by Chheangkea

Logline: Spanning two ever-changing decades and continents following the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, a Cambodian woman in Phnom Penh grapples with her own deep personal desires and her evolving familial roles as a hopeful daughter, a watchful wife, and eventually, a single mother in America.

Bio: Chheangkea is a Cambodian-American filmmaker based in New York. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in architecture from MIT and is currently in his thesis year as a Dean's Fellow at the NYU Tisch Graduate Film Program, focusing on writing-directing and cinematography. His previous short film, SKIN CAN BREATHE, is a finalist for the HBO Max APA Visionaries competition. It has screened internationally and is distributed by Max. Chheangkea is currently developing his first feature film, LITTLE PHNOM PENH, chronicling three decades of a Cambodian woman's life post-Khmer Rouge. His upcoming short film, GRANDMA NAI, is in post-production and supported by the Fonds Image de l'Organisation de la Francophonie. Currently, Chheangkea is a fellow in the Marcie Bloom Fellowship in Film. As a cinematographer, Chheangkea has worked on award-winning short films that have played at festivals worldwide. His cinematography work enables him to collaborate with other talented directors and further refine his visual language and storytelling.

“Diary of a Muslim Cynic” by Sarah Mokh

Logline: Desperate to escape her midwest small town in the aftermath of a tragedy, a teen girl's pursuits of love, college, and big city dreams are upended by an existential crisis and mystical encounters.

Bio: Sarah is a Lebanese-American writer and director interested in what the stories we tell reveal about how we believe the world works. She is a graduate of Harvard, where she studied Islamic Civilizations and English, and is currently a graduate student at NYU, where she studies Islamic mysticism and literature. She is a 2022 Film Independent Episodic fellow, a 2024 Sundance Feature Film fellow, and currently in development on her first feature film.

MENTORS

Mike Covino

Michael Covino is a filmmaker and actor from New York whose feature directorial debut, *THE CLIMB*, premiered in *Un Certain Regard* and won the Coup de Coeur Award at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival. *The Climb* went on to play Telluride, Toronto, London, Sundance, SXSW, and Deauville, where it won the Jury Prize. It was nominated for Best First Feature at the 2020 Film Independent Spirit Awards and selected for the National Board of Review's Best Independent Films. Prior to that, Mike produced the feature films *HUNTER GATHERER*, which won a Special Jury Prize at SXSW and was nominated for the Cassavetes Award in 2017, *KICKS* which was released by Focus in 2016, and *KEEP IN TOUCH*, which he also co-wrote. He recently Executive Produced *80 FOR BRADY* for Paramount, as well as *GOD'S TIME*, which was released by IFC. As an actor, he performed alongside Tom Hanks in Paul Greengrass' *NEWS OF THE WORLD* for Universal.

Bart Freundlich

Bart Freundlich is a film director, screenwriter and producer whose films include *AFTER THE WEDDING* (2019), *WOLVES* (2016), *THE REBOUND* (2009), *TRUST THE MAN* (2006), *WORLD TRAVELER* (2001), and the Sundance hit, *THE MYTH OF FINGERPRINTS* (1997). Freundlich has directed episodes of Apple+'s *Little Voice*, Amazon's Golden Globe winning comedy *Mozart in the Jungle*, as well as numerous episodes of Showtime's *Californication*. Freundlich grew up in New York City, where he attended NYU Tisch School of the Arts. He currently lives in NYC and Montauk.

Celine Song

An Academy Award-nominated screenwriter, Celine Song is a filmmaker and playwright whose debut feature, *PAST LIVES*, earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Motion Picture. Loosely based on and inspired by Song's own life experience, *PAST LIVES*, which she wrote and directed, was released by A24 in Summer 2023 after making its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. Acclaim for Song's debut feature *PAST LIVES* has been far and wide. The film won dozens of awards from film critics groups in the USA and abroad and won Best Feature Film at the 2023 Gotham Awards. Song and her film earned five Independent Spirit Award nominations including Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Feature, five Golden Globe nominations including Best Screenplay, Best Director and Best Picture Drama, three BAFTA nominations including Original Screenplay and Best Picture and two Academy Award nominations including Best Original Screenplay and Best Picture. Song also earned a nomination for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in First-Time Feature Film from the Directors Guild of America. As a playwright, Song is best known for *Endlings*, which premiered in 2019 at American Repertory Theater and had its New York debut in 2020 at New York Theatre Workshop. She has been a finalist for the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and a semifinalist for the American Playwriting Foundation's Relentless Award. Song also wrote on the first season of Amazon series *The Wheel of Time*.

ABOUT HAMPTONSFILM

HamptonsFilm, home of the Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF) was founded in 1992 to celebrate

the art of film and to introduce a unique and varied spectrum of international films and filmmakers to our audiences. A non-profit organization with year-round screenings of global narrative and documentary films, an annual Screenwriters Lab, a summer documentary showcase, and extensive educational initiatives, HamptonsFilm offers programs that enlighten, educate, and provide invaluable exposure for filmmakers, while also providing the East End of Long Island with an educational and cultural experience that enriches the lives of its citizens and contributes to the local economy. HIFF, celebrating its 32nd year, is an annual premiere film event in New York State, and an intimate showcase of some of the year's best offerings in contemporary cinema from around the world. Awarding prizes to filmmakers in cash and goods and services of over \$130,000 each year, with over \$5 million awarded in competition funds and services over the decades, our program continues to play an important role during awards season. For more information, please visit hamptonsfilmfest.org.

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