

HAMPTONS FILM

HAMPTONSFILM ANNOUNCES SELECTED SCREENWRITERS, SCREENPLAYS & MENTORS FOR 26th EDITION OF THE SCREENWRITERS LAB

Mentors Include Award-Winning Filmmakers **Cathy Yan** (**THE GALLERIST**; **BIRDS OF PREY**), **Cory Finley** (**THOROUGHBREDS**), **Noah Stahl** (**REALITY**)

Lab to Take Place April 10-12, 2026

East Hampton, NY (March 31, 2026) – HamptonsFilm, home of Hamptons International Film Festival, announced today the selected fellows, screenplays and mentors for the 26th edition of their annual Screenwriters Lab, which will take place April 10-12, 2026.

The three selected screenplays for 2026's Lab are **"Before the Echo Makes a Sound"** by **Chloe Abrahams**, **"Punter"** by **Jason Adam Maselle** and **"Eruption"** by **Katla Sólnes**. The Lab pairs rising screenwriters with established screenwriters, directors, and creative-producers for a weekend of one-on-one mentoring sessions. Submissions for this year's lab were up 60% compared to previous labs.

"When considering selections from this year's record number of submissions, these three projects really stood out with their distinct voices and individual storytelling approaches. We are also honored that all three mentors are alumni of HamptonsFilm, having previously shared their work at either the festival or the lab," stated Chief Creative Officer David Nugent.

This year's mentors include filmmaker **Cathy Yan**, a 2018 Lab alum with her project **DEAD PIGS**, which went on to win the Jury Prize for Ensemble Acting at the Sundance Film Festival and whose film **THE GALLERIST** recently premiered at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival; HIFF alum **Cory Finley**, whose film **THOROUGHBREDS** earned nominations at the Gotham Awards, Film Independent Spirit Awards, AFI Fest, and the Sundance Film Festival; and HIFF alum **Noah Stahl**, whose film **REALITY** earned both PGA and Gotham Awards nominations.

Recent mentors include **Justin Kuritzkes** (**CHALLENGERS**; **QUEER**), **Celine Song** (**PAST LIVES**; **MATERIALISTS**), **Dan Janvey** (**NOMADLAND**), **Michael Covino** (**SPLITSVILLE**), **Samuel D. Hunter** (**THE WHALE**), **Peter Hedges** (**ABOUT A BOY**, **PIECES OF APRIL**), **Jesse Andrews** (**HOPPERS**; **ME, EARL AND THE DYING GIRL**; **LUCA**), **Michael H. Weber** (**THE DISASTER ARTIST**, **500 DAYS OF SUMMER**), **DAVID SIEGEL** (**THE FRIEND**) and more.

HamptonsFilm will also present **"Eruption"** by **Katla Sólnes** with the 2026 Melissa Mathison Award. Established in 2016, the award is named for the late, beloved Oscar®-nominated screenwriter, and strives to foster the continued development of female writers in the industry. Previous recipients include **Cathy Yan's** **DEAD PIGS**, **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**. The 2026 Melissa Mathison Award recipient will receive a staged reading (with a casting director) of selected scenes from their project in New York City. To support women in film, please learn more and donate to the Melissa Mathison Award here: <https://hamptonsfilmfest.org/melissa-mathison-award/>.

Highlights of the Screenwriters Lab over the past 25 years have included **Kelly O'Sullivan's** **MOUSE**,

starring Sophie Okonedo, which premiered at the 2026 Berlinale and which IndieWire called “a profoundly tender coming-of-age tale;” Anu Valia’s WE STRANGERS, starring Kirby and Maria Dizzia, which 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 18th annual SummerDocs documentary showcase, and the Summer Outdoor Screening Series, will be announced at a later date. As previously announced, the 34th annual Hamptons International Film Festival will take place from October 2-12, 2026.

SCREENPLAYS

“Before the Echo Makes a Sound” by Chloe Abrahams

Logline: After her estranged father dies, Nila returns to her Tamil community in Sri Lanka for the first time in 20 years, looking for answers about her brother who disappeared at the beginning of the civil war. After discovering her father’s cassette tapes of an investigation into children who remember past lives, Nila ventures into an unfamiliar realm, one where she thinks she might find her brother.

Bio: Chloe Abrahams is a Sri Lankan-British artist and filmmaker. She investigates the therapeutic potential of the confessional, culminating in visceral work spanning moving image, sound, writing and performance. THE TASTE OF MANGO, Chloe’s debut non-fiction feature, won the British Independent Film Award for Best Debut Director, won the audience award at the BFI London Film Festival, and made the BAFTA longlist for Outstanding British Debut. She is currently developing her first narrative feature, BEFORE THE ECHO MAKES A SOUND, set in Kandy, Sri Lanka.

“Punter” by Jason Adam Maselle

Logline: On his 14th birthday, Brett and his grifter father must survive a day of chaos and deadly odds traversing Johannesburg’s gambling underworld in order to hit one final horse racing bet that will save their family.

Bio: Jason Adam Maselle is a BAFTA-nominated filmmaker from Johannesburg, South Africa. His work has screened on HBO Max and at numerous international and Oscar-qualifying film festivals. He received his MFA in filmmaking from New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. His latest short film PUNTER is executive produced by Spike Lee. The film premiered at the Locarno Film Festival, where it won a Special Jury Prize. The PUNTER’s feature film script adaptation is a 2025 NYU Purple List Winner. Jason is represented by Eryn Brown, Marc Mounier and Yang Fei at Entertainment 360. He misses going to the movies with his dad.

“Eruption” by Katla Sólnes

Logline: In the highlands of 1970s Iceland, a geologist’s wife finds her marriage tested when a wily American student arrives, stirring tensions as volatile as the surrounding volcanic landscape.

Bio: Named after Iceland's most dangerous volcano, Katla Sólnes is an Icelandic writer-director. She is a Sundance Screenwriters Lab fellow ('25) and a Hamptons Screenwriters Lab Fellow ('26) with her feature, ERUPTION, which is in development and is being produced by Anton Máni Svansson (GODLAND, THE LOVE THAT REMAINS) of "Still Vivid" Productions. Her work is environmentally-driven, juxtaposing intimate and complex relationship stories against the volatile landscape of Iceland. Katla holds a Master's degree in Screenwriting from Columbia University and has been the recipient of support from Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, The Icelandic Film Fund, and Indian Paintbrush.

MENTORS

Cory Finley

Cory Finley is a St. Louis-born, New-York-based filmmaker. His first film THOROUGHBREDS, starring Olivia Cooke, Anya Taylor-Joy and Anton Yelchin, was released by Focus Features and nominated for Independent Spirit and Gotham Awards. BAD EDUCATION, with Hugh Jackman and Alison Janney, won an Emmy in 2020 for HBO. His third feature LANDSCAPE WITH INVISIBLE HAND, with Tiffany Haddish and Asante Blackk, was released by MGM. He has directed episodes of *WeCrashed* and the upcoming Hulu series *Furious*. He began his career as a playwright, and his plays continue to be produced around the U.S.

Cathy Yan

Cathy Yan's debut feature DEAD PIGS, which she wrote and directed, won the Special Jury Prize for ensemble acting at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, among other accolades. Yan then directed the critically acclaimed BIRDS OF PREY (AND THE FANTABULOUS EMANCIPATION OF ONE HARLEY QUINN), starring Margot Robbie and Ewan McGregor. Yan made her television directing debut with an episode of HBO's *Succession*, for which she was nominated for an Emmy Award for "Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series." She recently premiered her latest film THE GALLERIST, starring Natalie Portman, at the 2026 Sundance Film Festival.

Yan studied at Princeton University, where she earned her B.A., and New York University, where she received a dual M.F.A. and M.B.A. in film. In a previous life, she was a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*, working in New York, Hong Kong and China.

Noah Stahl

Noah Stahl is a producer at Cinetic Media. Credits include Jeremy Jasper's Independent Spirit Award-nominated directing debut PATTI CAKE\$ (2017), which premiered at Sundance and Cannes and was released by Searchlight Pictures; Tina Satter's Peabody Award-winning directing debut REALITY (2023) starring Sydney Sweeney, which premiered at Berlin and Telluride and was released by HBO Films; THE WHITE HOUSE EFFECT (2024), an all-archival documentary directed by Bonni Cohen, Jon Shenk and Pedro Kos, which premiered at Telluride and was released by Netflix; and Jasper's O'DESSA (2025) starring Sadie Sink, which premiered at SXSW and was released by Searchlight Pictures. He is based in New York.