

NY SCREENWRITING FELLOWS

2023 - 2024



C.A. BARROW



C.A. Barrow is a Barbadian-born screenwriter and producer who uses action, sci-fi and horror to explore society and complicated family dynamics. The Howard University graduate's short form work has been showcased in film festivals and exhibitions nationwide. C.A. is currently developing two features and writing his first novel.

Film written during fellowship: “THERMAL”

Logline: A decorated war hero races to save NYC from a terrorist threat led by the best friend she left to die on the battlefield years before.

Other awards/fellowships/accolades:

- 2022 Project Involve Producing Fellow
- 2021 Wavelength x Black TV & Film Collective Black Producers Fellow

MISA DAYSON



Misa Dayson, a native Harlem, New Yorker, is a writer, producer, filmmaker, educator, and cultural anthropologist. Her short films include “Four Women”, a meditation on Black female sexuality in the media, and; “The Love Project”, a short documentary about the U.S. HIV/AIDS epidemic from the perspective of Black American women. Misa also works in various capacities in film production and development, including formerly at Alicia Keys’ film production company, AK Worldwide, and most recently produced the web video, Endings: The Good, the Bad, and the Insanely Great, directed by Oscar-winning screenwriter Michael Arndt. She is a 2023 Milly Arts Core Residency Screenwriting Fellow, and a 2023 Fellow of the Writers Guild of America, East/FilmNation Entertainment New York Screenwriting Fellowship. Misa is a graduate of Wesleyan University with a degree in Film Studies and African American Studies, and a graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles, with a degree in Cultural Anthropology.

Film written during fellowship: “SUNDOWN TOWN”

Logline: The plans of a liberal corporate lawyer-turned-mayor to bring jobs to her struggling small Southern town and turn it into a symbol of the New South are threatened when she is misrepresented as defending her husband when he makes a racial gaffe on social media. When she tries to make amends by supporting a plan for reparations, a Pandora’s box of family and town secrets opens, threatening the stability of her marriage, her relationships, and the economic future of her town.

Other awards/fellowships/accolades:

- 2023 Milly Arts Core Residency Screenwriting Fellow

TAMIKA R. GUSHARD



Guishard is a first-gen New Yorker from St. Kitts & (Hamilton's birthplace) Nevis. She taught middle school before completing NYU Graduate Film as a Park Ranger producing Ken Burns webisodes. She fuses storytelling and pedagogy from museums and reservations to Tribeca. Selected for Cannes Screenplay List and Breaking Through the Lens, her NYU Purple List, African dance-driven project was showcased at TIFF and supported by Rooftop Films and NY State Council on the Arts. Oscar-qualifying festival selections, its proofs of concept were shot, written, directed, and co-produced by Black women. Guishard has fellowshiped with Black Women Film! Canada, Athena Film Festival's LA Writers Lab and Residency Unlimited. When certifying her Minority and Women-owned business enterprise, Guishard Films, she won the Celebrate Equality NY Film Challenge and continues to partner with equity-focused entities such as Ghetto Film School and Black Men Teach for storytelling that empowers marginalized communities. The first Black communications professor at Adelphi University, she represents Andover, Schuyler, CUNY, and Penn as well as her hometown of East New York.

Film written during fellowship: "BRAINWASH"

Logline: After Noel's submission to a true crime TV show's DEI call is rejected, the science teacher triggers her family's PTSD to solve her sister's cold case and activate Black women at all costs.

Other awards/fellowships/accolades:

- 2021 Cannes Screenplay List, New York, NY
- 2021 Breaking Through The Lens, New York, NY [United Kingdom]
- 2019 Rooftop Films Filmmaker Fund
- 2018 Athena Film Festival Screenwriting LA Lab, Los Angeles, CA
- 2018 Residency Unlimited, Brooklyn, NY
- 2017 Black Women Film! Canada, Toronto, Ontario [Canada]
- 2017 IFP Week, Brooklyn, NY
- 2017 Celebrate Equality NY, Albany, NY
- 2016 NY State Council on the Arts (NYSCA)
- 2015 NYU Purple List, New York, NY

RASHMI



Storytelling beyond genres and mediums, connecting past borders and barriers, Rashmi is a multi-award winning screenwriter, AUDELCO-nominated actor, and acclaimed singer-songwriter. Her new album of original songs, MAGIC, comes out in summer of 2024. She loves dark chocolate, coffee, and riding her bike along the East River. www.EverythingRashmi.com

Film written during fellowship: “EN ROOT”

Logline: Laxmi, a Brooklyn school teacher, travels to India after several years to connect with estranged family she hasn't seen since her mother's sudden death in a car crash in New York. Her memories of her mother's love of music play a prominent role in unearthing buried secrets and transforming Laxmi and her relationship to family.

Other awards/fellowships/accolades:

- Queens Council on the Arts New Works Grant Recipient
- Puffin Foundation New Works Grant Recipient
- Tribeca Performing Arts Center Writer in Performance (5x)
- HBO Urbanworld Screenwriting Contest Honorable Mention Winner
- Athena Film Festival Writer's Lab Member
- Vail and Atlanta Film Festival Screenwriting Contest Semi-Finalist
- Sundance Producers Lab Finalist
- Our Perspective Theatre Playwriting Grant Recipient
- Harvard Kennedy's School Women's Policy Journal Associate Editor

IRINA C. RODRÍGUEZ



Irina is a New York City-based film and television writer. Born and raised in Carolina, Puerto Rico, she graduated from Penn State with a degree in film. Irina's work seeks to celebrate and elevate women and people from minority and queer communities. She is also a practicing antitrust attorney.

Film written during fellowship: "RETURN OF THE HIP BREAKERS"

Logline: When financial woes put her struggling dance school at risk of closing, an aging breakdancer reluctantly agrees to reunite with her old Bronx crew for one last chance to take down their old rivals and win the big championship.

Other awards/fellowships/accolades:

- Top 15% of the Nicholl competition (2022) ("The Countess")
- The Writers Lab (2021) (selected for "The Countess" and a semi-finalist for pilot "Hood")
- The Athena Film Festival's Writers Lab (2023) ("The Countess")
- Alfred P. Sloan Writing Fellowship (2023) ("The Countess")
- Blacklist Recommended Writer

MICHELLE SARKANY



Michelle Sarkany is a 2023 fellow in the Writers Guild of America East/FilmNation Screenwriting Fellowship. She previously won the 2020 Austin Film Festival screenwriting competition, had her short documentary air on PBS after winning the PBS “Reel 13” competition, and staged her short play in LA and NYC. She writes about all things hilarious and full of heart including, but not limited to: robots, Mozart, houseplants, shoes, Jupiter, and microwave oatmeal. She is a screenwriter and filmmaker who lives in NYC.

(Film written during fellowship: “CALLERY PEAR”

Logline: Anabel is content growing and selling grass (the ornamental kind!) with her imaginary best friend Carl Linnaeus in upstate New York and is never ever EVER going back to NYC. But when her parents sell her childhood home in NYC she reluctantly road trips there with bestie Carl for one last visit, trying hard, but failing, to avoid facing everything she ran away from 20 years ago.

Other awards/fellowships/accolades:

- Winner - 2020 Austin Film Festival Screenwriting Competition
- Winner - PBS "Reel 13" competition

RONIEL TESSLER



Roniel developed his WGAE screenplay under the guidance of his mentors, Tony Kushner and Pamela Koffler. He is an Academy Nicholl Semifinalist, an O'Neill Semifinalist, a winner of the Humanitas NEW VOICES grant, and a winner of the inaugural Black List/Austin Television Festival script competition. Roniel's work brings heart to difficult topics and explores the inner child in all of us. As the gay son of an Orthodox rabbi, his scripts often feature LGBT characters and other unsung voices who finally go after what they've always been too afraid to pursue.

Film written during fellowship: "THE YEAR OF THE UNICORN"

Logline: When Soul embarks on a road trip across America for her 10th birthday, she must learn how to keep moving forward when life turns out to be far from the perfect world she dreamed it would be.

Other awards/fellowships/accolades:

- O'Neill Semifinalist
- Nicholl Fellowship Semifinalist
- Humanitas NEW VOICES winner