

BlackStar Projects Announces Staff and Board Additions

Organization continues to grow, with year-round programming and the 10th annual Film Festival on the horizon

(Philadelphia, PA – February 9, 2021) **BlackStar Projects**, the premier organization celebrating visionary Black, Brown, and Indigenous film and media artists, is proud to announce a further expansion of its staff and board, reflecting its continued growth as it enters its 10th year.

Three new full-time staff members are joining the BlackStar team: **Sara Zia Ebrahimi** as Deputy Director; **Leo Brooks** as Communications & Design Associate; and **Sydney Alicia Rodriguez** as Program Associate. These new staff members join as BlackStar continues to expand its reach into year-long programming that provides artists and filmmakers with opportunities for collaborations with colleagues, audiences, funders, and distributors across the world.

Prior to joining BlackStar, Ebrahimi has held positions at the Leeway Foundation, Independent Television Service's (ITVS) Community Cinema program and at Bread & Roses Community Fund. Brooks, formerly BlackStar's 2020 Summer Fellow, has also held positions at the Jewish Museum and HvADesign, and Rodriguez has worked on the BlackStar Film Festival for several years, in addition to positions at Aubin Pictures and MTV.

BlackStar is also proud to welcome to their esteemed Board of Directors **Taj Reid**, EVP, Executive Design Director at Edelman. Reid joins a robust Board that includes **Maori Karmael Holmes**, BlackStar's Artistic Director and CEO; **Denise Beek**, Chief Communications Officer of 'me too.' International; **Amanda Branson Gill**, Co-Founder of Kilo Films; **Sekou Campbell**, Partner at Culhane Meadows PLLC; **Michael Garden**, Principal of Michael Garden Group; **Sunanda Ghosh**, Director of Strategic



Growth at The Redford Center; **Ted Passon**, President of All Ages Productions; and **Tayyib Smith**, Principal of organizations Little Giant, Smith&Roller, and Pipeline Philly.

BlackStar continues its special print portfolio and fundraiser, celebrating the 10th anniversary of the organization. A limited-edition print is currently available from *TIME* (BlackStar 2020) director **Garrett Bradley**, and the organization will continue release an exclusive, limited edition, 8.5 x 11-inch print on the 15th of each month, featuring artworks by **Damon Davis**, **Kevin Jerome Everson**, **Haile Gerima**, **Arthur Jafa**, **Kahlil Joseph**, **Louis Massiah**, **Terence Nance**, **Michelle Angela Ortiz**, **Fahamu Pecou**, **Andrea Pippins**, and **Cauleen Smith**. More information on purchasing options and the print series is available on BlackStar's website [here](#).

Expanding on the success of the annual day-long filmmakers symposium at the Festival (that has included 100 filmmakers of color annually), BlackStar is also hosting **The William and Louise Greaves Filmmaker Seminar**, a three-day gathering for artists of color working in cinematic realms this year. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2021 Seminar will take place virtually from March 19-21. It will feature film screenings and discussions, a keynote, a director's commentary, and some works-in-progress screenings. Applications to attend are now closed, but any questions can be directed to seminar@blackstarfest.org.

Submissions for this year's BlackStar Film Festival, which will be held virtually again in light of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic from **August 4-8, 2021**, are now open. Deadlines for submissions are February 10 (Early), March 8 (Preferred) and March 31 (Late). Filmmakers will be notified in early May.

BlackStar Film Festival's 2020 edition included approximately 90 films, including 24 world premieres, and represented more than 20 countries. In addition to presenting a wide-ranging program of live programs and panels online, the

festival also featured three drive-in screenings at Philadelphia's Mann Center for the Performing Arts in West Fairmount Park.

For overall information on BlackStar, including its festival and programs, visit blackstarfest.org.

About BlackStar Projects

BlackStar Projects, home of the annual BlackStar Film Festival, celebrates and provides platforms for visionary Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists. We do this by producing year-round programs including film screenings, exhibitions, an annual film festival, a filmmaker seminar, a film production lab, and a journal of visual culture. These programs provide artists opportunities for viable strategies for collaborations with other artists, audiences, funders, and distributors.

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