

BlackStar Projects Announces Mira Nair as 2022 Luminary Award Recipient

*Academy Award-Nominated Director, Filmmaker, and Activist Will be
Honored at This Year's BlackStar Film Festival*



Mira Nair. Courtesy of Mira Nair.

(Philadelphia, PA - April 28, 2022) — **BlackStar Projects**, the premier organization celebrating visionary Black, Brown, and Indigenous film and media artists, is thrilled to announce the 2022 recipient of the **Richard Nichols Luminary Award: Mira Nair.**



Nair is an Academy-Award nominated director, filmmaker, and activist. Best known for her visually dense films, her debut feature, *Salaam Bombay!* (1988) won the Caméra d'Or at Cannes, followed by the groundbreaking *Mississippi Masala* (1991), and the Golden Globe & Emmy-winning *Hysterical Blindness* (2001). She was the first woman to win Venice Film Festival's coveted Golden Lion, and was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian honor, in 2012, among many other accolades. She is also the founder of the Salaam Baalak Trust, which provides access to education, mental and physical health services, job placement, counseling, and shelter to street children, and the Maisha Film Lab in East Africa to train film makers on the continent.

The annual award is named after the late Richard Nichols—the manager and creative genius behind *The Roots*, as well as mentor to BlackStar Founder, Artistic Director, and CEO Maori Karmael Holmes—and honors an individual for their contributions as artists and social change agents. Past recipients include **Menelik Shabazz, Haile Gerima, Julie Dash, RZA, Ava DuVernay, dream hampton,** and **Marcia Smith.**

“We are thrilled to honor Mira Nair, a truly trailblazing artistic force, with this year's Luminary Award,” said **Maori Karmael Holmes, Founder, Artistic Director, and CEO of BlackStar Projects.** “The breadth of her work as an artist and an activist, and the way those two passions inform and interact with each other in everything she does, have left a beautiful and enduring impact on our field.”

BlackStar will honor Nair at this year's BlackStar Film Festival, set to take place August 3-7, 2022. Similar to last year's festival, the eleventh edition will be hybrid, with select in-person screenings at Penn Live Arts at Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia. Information on additional Philadelphia showings, venues, and in-person programming is forthcoming.

This year's Festival will also feature the fourth annual BlackStar Pitch, a live event where filmmakers pitch their short non-fiction projects in front of a virtual audience and panel of judges for the opportunity to receive an artist grant from OneFifty, a Warner Bros. /

Discovery brand. A second-place winner will receive an invitation to be a part of IF/Then Shorts' FINISH LINE program. [Applications for the BlackStar Pitch are now open.](#)

BlackStar Projects and its year-round programs are generously supported by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Ford Foundation/JustFilms, Independence Public Media Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Mighty Arrow Family Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Perspective Fund, The Philadelphia Foundation, PopCulture Collaborative, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Samuel S. Fels Fund, Surdna Foundation, Wallace Foundation, William Penn Foundation, and Wyncote Foundation, in addition to its [board of directors](#), community partners, and a host of generous [individual donors and organizations](#).

For more information on the Luminary Award or the BlackStar Film Festival, please visit blackstarfest.org.

About Mira Nair

Mira Nair is an Academy-Award nominated director best known for her visually dense films that pulsate with life. Her debut feature, *Salaam Bombay!* (1988) won the Caméra d'Or at Cannes, followed by the groundbreaking *Mississippi Masala* (1991), the Golden Globe & Emmy-winning *Hysterical Blindness* (2001), and the international hit *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), for which she was the first woman to win Venice Film Festival's coveted Golden Lion. A fiercely independent filmmaker, she then made *Vanity Fair* (2004), *The Namesake* (2006), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012), and *Queen of Katwe* (2016). In 2020, Nair directed an adaptation of Vikram Seth's epic tale, *A Suitable Boy*, for BBC/Netflix, a sprawling tale of identity and love in a newly independent India. Mira has just completed the pilot of *National Treasure* for DisneyPlus. Future projects include *The Jungle Prince of Delhi* for Amazon and Nair's *Monsoon Wedding, the Musical*, heading to Broadway. Her next feature film is an international musical with Pharrell Williams. An activist by nature, Nair founded Salaam Baalak Trust for street children in 1989, and the Maisha Film Lab in East Africa to train film makers on the continent in 2004. In 2012, she was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian honor.

About BlackStar Projects

BlackStar Projects is the producer of the BlackStar Film Festival, an annual celebration of the visual and storytelling traditions of the African diaspora and global communities of color — showcasing films by Black, Brown, and Indigenous people from around the world. In addition to the acclaimed festival, BlackStar presents an array of programming across film and visual culture year-round, including the twice-annual journal *Seen*, the podcast *Many Lumens*, and the Philadelphia Filmmaker Lab, among other initiatives.

Press Contacts

Ed Winstead

Senior Director, Cultural Counsel

ed@culturalcounsel.com

Sam Riehl

Senior Account Executive, Cultural Counsel

sam@culturalcounsel.com

Emma Frohardt

Senior Account Coordinator, Cultural Counsel

emma@culturalcounsel.com