

NYWIFT || New York Women in Film & Television

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NEW YORK WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION ANNOUNCES

LOREEN ARBUS DISABILITY AWARENESS GRANT AWARDEE *SINGLE* BY ASHLEY EAKIN

NEW YORK, NY – February 26, 2020 – New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) is pleased to announce the presentation of the Loreen Arbus Disability Awareness Grant to Ashley Eakin for her narrative short film *Single*. The film completion grant, now in its 13th year, is provided through the generosity of longtime disability rights advocate Loreen Arbus and awards \$7,500 to a woman filmmaker for a film on physical or developmental disability issues.

Single confronts the complexities of being disabled and dating. Kim, who was born with one arm, gets set up to go on a blind date with Jake, who – to her horror – has only one hand. Unable to get over the apparent ignorance of their matchmaker, as well as her own insecurities about being different, Kim tries to bail. Writer/director Ashley Eakin is a filmmaker with a physical disability and a participant in the 2020 AFI Directing Workshop for Women, where she produced *Single*. In 2019, Eakin shadowed Mark Pellington on a Quibi series starring Sophie Turner. She was also the assistant to director Jon M. Chu while making *Crazy Rich Asians*. Eakin's short film *Blue* premiered at the 2019 LA Shorts Fest and her documentary *The Details*, featuring Henry Golding and Awkwafina, was selected for the Hamilton Film Festival.

Single will premiere at the prestigious SXSW festival in March 2020.

"Disability is rarely included in the diversity conversation and I am excited to be putting forward content that gives a more diverse representation of what it means to live with a disability," filmmaker Ashley Eakin said. "This grant has come at a pivotal time in my career where the road ahead is unknown but holds many possibilities, and this push forward fuels my passion to change the landscape and disrupt the narrative for disability content. The time has come to see ourselves represented on screen. I am forever grateful to NYWIFT and everyone involved."

The project was chosen from a wide range of applications submitted by women filmmakers from around the country.

"I am thrilled to continue my partnership with New York Women in Film & Television, an organization near and dear to my heart, and support a wonderful up-and-coming filmmaker, Ashley Eakin," Loreen Arbus said. "People with disability the world's largest minority, and their voices so often go unheard in the media. We hope to change that. To have a filmmaker with disability like Ashley telling such a unique and deeply personal story, in such an insightful and entertaining manner, is a wonderful way to amplify, support and celebrate this community."

"NYWIFT is proud to once again join forces with Loreen Arbus to support women filmmakers and champion the underrepresented voices of the disabled community," said NYWIFT Executive Director Cynthia Lopez. "Ashley Eakin's film is fresh, smart and biting funny, with a sharp point of view and unflinching vulnerability that provides a unique window into the

complexities of being young and disabled. We are thrilled for her success and can't wait to see what she does next. She is a filmmaker to watch."

In addition, the project received an in-kind post production grant for media accessibility assets: audio description for blind and low vision audiences and closed captioning for Deaf and hard of hearing audiences. This grant was generously provided by Michele Spitz of Woman of Her Word. Spitz has provided these elements to the NYWIFT Loren Arbus grantees since 2016.

"*Single* is a wonderfully creative short film with thoughtfully presented commentary on the nuances of dating for all people to reflect upon," Michele Spitz said. "Ashley also happens to be a rather extraordinary woman with a bigger story that led her to making this impactful film. No doubt Ashley is going to continue to pursue stories in media to help raise the bar of awareness and encourage audiences to think outside the box."

Learn more about NYWIFT grants at <https://www.nywift.org/fund-for-women-filmmakers/>.

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About New York Women in Film & Television:

New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT) advocates for equality in the moving image industry and supports women in every stage of their careers. As the preeminent entertainment industry association for women in New York, NYWIFT energizes women by illuminating their achievements, presenting training and professional development programs, awarding scholarships and grants, and providing access to a supportive community of peers. NYWIFT brings together more than 2,500 women and men working both above and below the line. NYWIFT is part of a network of 50 women in film chapters worldwide, representing more than 15,000 members. NYWIFT is a nonprofit 501c3 public charity.

More information can be found online at: www.NYWIFT.org

About Loreen Arbus:

Loreen Arbus is the President of the Loreen Arbus Foundation, The Goldenson-Arbus Foundation and Loreen Arbus Productions, Inc. Her philanthropy supports a broad scope of interests, including advocacy for women and girls, as well as for the world's largest minority, people with disabilities. She has established and funds many scholarships that both enhance and elevate social consciousness around her philanthropic interests – scientific and medical research, public policy, the arts, media responsibility, human and animal rights. Arbus holds the distinction of being the first woman to head programming for a U.S. network, a feat accomplished twice (both at Showtime and Cable Health Network/Lifetime). She has been twice nominated for an Emmy. Arbus, widely recognized for her humanitarian and professional accomplishments, has received The Heart of Giving Award presented by President Bill Clinton in 2001 and was chosen as one (of 40) Leading Women Entrepreneurs of the World 2002.

About Michele Spitz:

Professional voiceover artist, public speaker, advocate, and philanthropist Michele Spitz is dedicated to making the world accessible to people of all communities by providing her vocal talents to filmmakers, publishers, speaking venues, charitable organizations, and nonprofits. She has narrated content for short

and full-length documentaries, feature films, children's programming, museums, industrial videos, audio manuals and PSA's. She is most passionate about her audio description production and narration for blind and low vision audiences, voicing over 65 projects including films such as *Pavarotti*, *The Beatles: Eight Days a Week*, *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life*, *Miss You Already*, *Dealt*, and *The Great Muppet Caper*. Michele also has co-produced and voiced audio description for museum exhibits such as "The Senses: Design Beyond Vision" Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum, as well as video describing annual fundraising gala videos for disability organizations. Michele sponsored and voiced the audio description for select films from 2014-2017 for Superfest: SF International Disability Film Festival and continued the same for ReelAbilities: NY and LA International Disability Film Festivals from 2015-2020. Spitz was the first to initiate and fund BAFTA NY scholarships for graduate film students with disabilities, initiate annual film media accessibility grants for filmmakers for NYWIFT and WIF LA, as well as funding assistive audience technology in various venues.

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