

REELSTORIES

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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WHO WE ARE

Reel Stories is training the next generation of empowered feminist filmmakers.

Through collaborative, hands-on programs, we're creating a pipeline of young women and non-binary people with the skills they need to enter the film and media industry and the confidence they need to succeed.



TEACHING
MEDIA
LITERACY



WORKING WITH
EXPERIENCED
MENTORS



SUPPLYING
FILMMAKING
EQUIPMENT



EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

Before shelter-in-place began, Reel Stories had a number of successful in-person events, including an **Animation Exploration Workshop** in January, **Art of the Interview Workshop** in February, and screening ***Nevertheless to celebrate International Women's Day*** early in March.



When shelter-in-place began in late March 2020, Reel Stories quickly pivoted to all online events, beginning with a **Scriptwriting Do's and Don'ts workshop** taught by Reel Stories alum Yasaman Ford.

In 2020, we launched 5 different types of online programs, including ***Ask an Expert, Reel Stories In Conversation With, Reel Stories Guide To, Reel Stories Tutorial, and Reel Stories Master Class.***

The Institute Online launched in May, connecting our most experienced filmmakers to an online community of their peers.

In June and July, we hosted our first online sessions of our **Reel Stories Summer Program** and **Online Film Festivals**.

In October, we began our **Advanced Filmmakers Cohort** and hosted our first entirely virtual **Women's Filmmaking Weekend**.

100+
Virtual Events

EMBRACING CHANGES

It took Reel Stories just one week to completely re-direct all of our programs, events, workshops, and screenings to be held online.

All of our online programs gave participants the opportunity to expand their knowledge of filmmaking from the comfort and safety of their own homes.



HOSTED

45+

Zoom classes/Q&A's with
Media Professionals

50+

Instagram Lives
guest starring
Media Creators



100+



400+

GAINED

Over 500 new Social Media Followers

REACHED

300+

Newsletter Subscribers

20,000+

Website Visits

20,000+ Weekly Reach

30,000+ Weekly Impressions

SUMMER CAMP ONLINE

For the first time ever, our Reel Stories Summer Camp was held 100% virtually. 15 student attended our June session of camp, and 15 students attended our July session. We mixed our Advanced and Beginner filmmakers into the same sessions, allowing Advanced Filmmakers to mentor Beginning filmmakers.

Nearly 100 people attended our summer camp film festivals, which were hosted online for the first time. Hosting our film festivals online allowed for people from all over the world to attend.



2 *two-week
summer
programs*

12 *films
created*

YEAR-ROUND ENGAGEMENT

After School Programs

In 2020, Reel Stories hosted a number of After School programs for high school and middle school students.

The Institute Online

For The Institute, 8 of our most advanced participants met online once a week for 20 weeks.

Student Board

The 2020 Reel Stories student board is made up of 9 stellar filmmakers. Their film about the 2020 Presidential Election was finished at the end of March 2021. You can watch the film [here](#).

Advanced Filmmaking Cohort

8 filmmakers worked with Alliey Lau and Yasaman Ford to produce 2 short films.

Film Screenings

Reel Stories hosted 5 film screenings in 2020, including *Nevertheless, Crip Camp*, Lunafest selected short films, *After The Game* and *I am Greta*.

Online Workshops

Reel Stories had over 20 educational online workshops where participants learned from experts like Christie Goshe and Niema Jordan.



EVALUATION

We have two types of monitoring and evaluation we conduct. Directly after camp, we ask the campers about their experiences at camp and what they have gained. Additionally, we continue to follow up with our alumnae through formal evaluations and via our ongoing development programs. In this way we're able to see how our campers use their media creation tools and hear back from them about how Reel Stories has prepared them for academic pursuits, professional work, and where the program has led to specific job opportunities.

June 2020 Summer Camp

100% view media more critically after attending Reel Stories
75% feel more confident in their ability to speak in public
75% feel more confident in their leadership skills
88% plan to continue creating films after camp
63% plan on attending camp again

July 2020 Summer Camp

80% view media more critically after attending Reel Stories
90% feel more confident in their ability to speak in public
100% feel more confident in their leadership skills
100% plan to continue creating films after camp
90% said their overall technical filmmaking skills improved
70% plan on attending camp again



DIVERSITY



“Reel Stories teaches women and non-binary people film-making skills in order to empower us to create films that are representative of our experiences. I love being a part of this supportive community.”

- Grace Patterson, former camper and current staff member

50%
campers identify
as people
of color

40%
campers receive
financial aid

“As a person of color and a woman with family members who have disabilities and are in foster care - I’ve witnessed the journeys of people who are not shown in media, and I can see my own people wanting representation. Film gives me the opportunity to give a voice to people who don’t have the platform.”

- Liz Tril, Institute Filmmaker and Production Company Member



FINANCIAL

2020 was a wild ride, especially with our financials! We received our largest grant to date, \$75,000, from Radio Drama Network and though both our tuition revenue and donations were down we were still able to serve 618 students and hosted 60 online programs consisting of filmmaking workshops, speakers, and virtual screenings. We received additional corporate funding and qualified for both PPP loans and the EIDL loan to stay afloat in 2020.

Our community supported Reel Stories incredibly. We had 250 individual donors, and at the end of the year giving campaign, we were able to triple our fundraising goal.

Additionally, even with the challenges of the pandemic, we were able to keep our entire staff employed, and we were able to hire several of our alumnae to help with our online programming.

We don't know what 2021 will bring, but we learned many lessons and by putting our mission and participants first in 2020, Reel Stories was not only able to survive, but thrive.

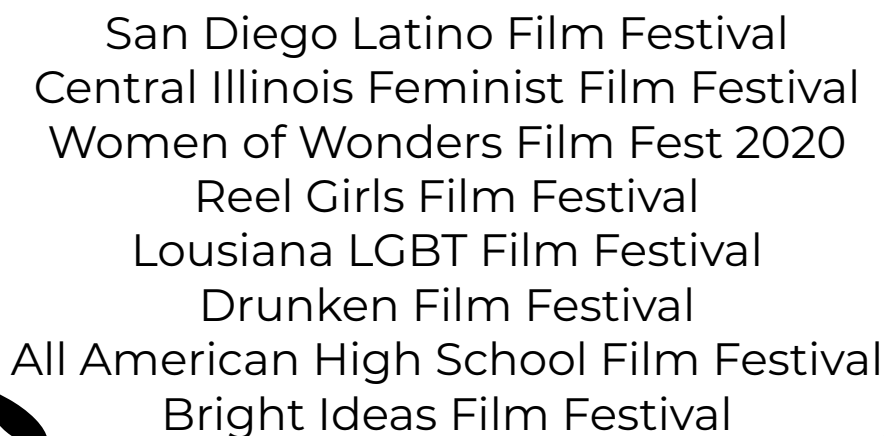


FILM FESTIVALS

We had over 100 attendees at our 2 virtual film festivals. Holding our film festivals online allowed for the family members and friends of our filmmakers who lived outside of the Bay Area to easily attend.

Although in-person events ended, the films created at Reel Stories continued to be celebrated through online film festivals.

In 2020, our campers' films were accepted into:



San Diego Latino Film Festival
Central Illinois Feminist Film Festival
Women of Wonders Film Fest 2020
Reel Girls Film Festival
Louisiana LGBT Film Festival
Drunken Film Festival
All American High School Film Festival
Bright Ideas Film Festival



FILMS PRODUCED

Reel Stories filmmakers created 17 short films in 2020. The topics of the films ranged from inequity in education for students and administrators of color, navigating solitary confinement in a dystopian world, educating peers about plastic pollution, and more!



Seek by Lucid Productions

9

narrative
films

8

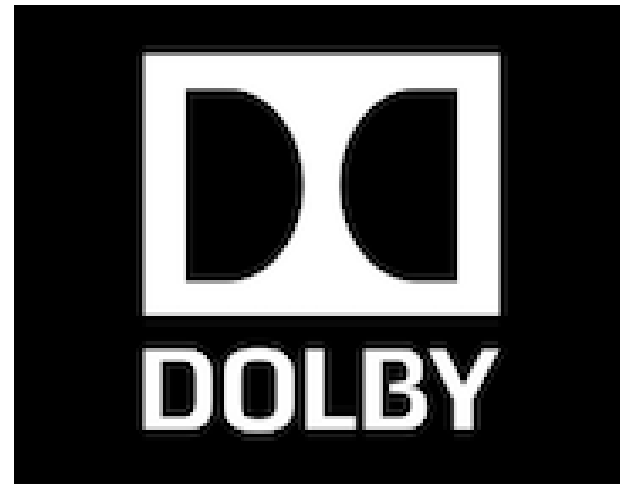
documentary
films



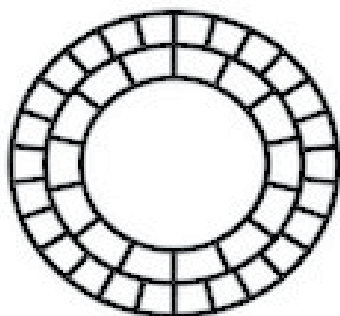
LGBTQ+ History by Alana Meyers of Olive Toast Productions

Check out all of the Reel Stories films produced in 2020 [here](#).

SPONSORS



**Radio Drama
Network**



VSCO

WALTER & ELISE HAAS FUND

Message from Esther Pearl

Wow! What a year. At the end of 2019 I was looking forward to a huge year of growth for Reel Stories. We had big plans for expanding our film programs closing the gender gap in the film industry, but 2020 had other plans for us all. Though it wasn't what we anticipated, my team and I were able to have a momentous and innovative year. Just one week after shelter-in place went into effect we converted all our programming online to continue serving and growing our filmmaking programs and community. I am honored to have such a wonderful team that worked tirelessly to make this happen. Without Anjalie, Alexandria, Yasaman, Grace and Nanami I'm not sure Reel Stories would still be here today.



Since shelter-in place, Reel Stories has responded to our filmmaking community's need to connect, create stories and be seen. Now more than ever we need to move young women and non-binary creators' stories to the center of the frame. By quickly converting our programming online, we have been able to create connections and community through the universal and humanizing act of storytelling. We want to reach even more young people and bring their stories and content to a larger audience. As 2020 served us a global pandemic, racial justice uprisings, societal inequalities and a dramatic and contentious presidential race, the need to double down on our support and foster our female and non-binary creators has become even more crucial. We can not look back on these historical events and only have them told and documented from one perspective.

I have never been more impressed with the filmmakers in our programs. During summer they spent hours each day for two weeks on zoom creating short films in community, though a socially distanced community, with other teen filmmakers. During the fall our afterschool programs served young women and non-binary teens from all over the country and world. Our professional filmmakers have stepped up and donated hours of their time on virtual master classes and Instagram Live.

At the beginning of 2021, Reel Stories merged with BAVC, a cornerstone for community media in the Bay Area for 45 years that has helped launch the education and careers of generations of media makers. Now that Reel Stories is "powered by BAVC", our programs can flourish and grow.

This transition has aligned with my own life changes. Having been inspired by the thousands of incredible filmmakers we have trained at Reel Stories, I have stepped away from the day-to-day running of Reel Stories to focus on my own creative endeavors. My family has had the opportunity to move abroad for a year and I am taking that time to bring some film projects to life.

I am so grateful to the Reel Stories filmmakers and community for your unwavering support.

Esther Pearl

Reel Stories Executive Director



Together we can show girls and gender non-conforming youth that their voices matter and give them the **skills, experience, and connections** they need to succeed in media careers.

“Participating with Reel Stories is a must for teenage girls who want to make an impact on the world through film. My daughter found her passion for film and just finished her fourth summer at Reel Stories! I cannot thank Esther Pearl enough for providing the springboard and support for my daughter through Reel Stories trainings, guest filmmaker events, and film showings.

- Reel Stories Parent

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