

BREAKTHROUGH HEALTH

FILM FESTIVAL at TULANE

Inspiring Action Through Storytelling



TULANE UNIVERSITY
Health Equity Institute



PARTNERS for
ADVANCING
HEALTH EQUITY



TULANE UNIVERSITY
Celia Scott Weatherhead School of
Public Health & Tropical Medicine

April 6-8, 2025

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ABOUT THE FILM FESTIVAL

The Breakthrough Health Film Festival at Tulane University is an inspiring showcase of storytelling through film that promotes health and wellness, aiming to spark conversations, foster understanding, and inspire action toward a healthier society for all. Films and post-screening conversations will shine a light on human stories from community builders, advocates, filmmakers, producers, and artists, to broaden our perspective on the challenges and triumphs shaping our understanding of health and well-being today. These voices offer fresh insights into the social and systemic issues impacting our communities.

Each day of the film festival will highlight a specific theme: 'Movement Makers,' 'The Power of Choice,' and 'The Power of Storytelling.' Films and shorts that resonate with these powerful themes will be showcased, creating a meaningful experience for all attendees.



Location:

Celia Scott Weatherhead School
of Public Health and Tropical
Medicine

Tulane Diboll Gallery and
Auditorium

1440 Canal Street New Orleans,
LA 70112





PROGRAM SCHEDULE

DAY 1: MOVEMENT MAKERS

1:00PM: Doors Open/Registration

1:30PM: Opening Remarks

1:42PM: Shorts Program

3:09PM: Intermission

3:30PM: **The Skin You're In**

4:30PM: Filmmaker Q&A

5:06PM: Closing Remarks

5:10PM: Reception

DAY 2: THE POWER OF CHOICE

4:00PM: Doors Open/Registration

4:45PM: Opening Remarks

5:00PM: Shorts Program

5:45PM: Shorts Filmmaker Q&A

6:03PM: Intermission

6:15PM: **On the Divide**

7:35PM: Filmmaker Q&A

8:12PM: Closing Remarks

8:22PM: Reception

DAY 3: THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

4:00PM: Doors Open/Registration

4:45PM: Opening Remarks

4:55PM: Shorts Program

5:58PM: Shorts Filmmaker Q&A

6:16PM: Intermission

6:28PM: **Alive Inside**

7:48PM: Filmmaker Q&A

8:20PM: Closing Remarks

8:30PM: Reception

DAY 1: Movement Makers

Sunday, April 6th

1:30PM - 6:00PM

The opening day sets the stage for three days of powerful storytelling that honors resilience, activism, and the unbreakable spirit of communities fighting for justice. The films showcase how movements—whether cultural, social, or political—emerge from lived experiences and collective determination. From reclaiming identity to confronting systemic injustice, these stories remind us that change is not just necessary—it is inevitable.

The feature film, *The Skin You're In*, is an urgent exploration of racial health disparities in America. Director **Dr. Thomas LaVeist** will join us for a Q&A following the screening, offering deeper insight into the intersections of history, policy, and personal narratives that shape health outcomes today.



Moderating the discussion is **Gian Smith**, a poet, filmmaker, and cultural curator whose work bridges storytelling and social change. With a deep commitment to amplifying narratives of identity, community, and justice, Smith will guide the conversation, connecting the film's themes to broader social movements and lived experiences.

Movement Makers: *Shorts Program*



Directed by: **Enrichment to Empowerment Program** at the **Violence Prevention Institute** at Tulane

This is New Orleans: Stories of Truth and Hope (2024) - 19 min

For a year, the Enrichment 2 Empowerment program has supported young people in understanding the root causes of violence and its impact on themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods. Engaged participants interviewed dozens of New Orleanians to reveal the reality of violence in the city along with solutions and what can provide hope. This documentary screening is the next step in their social action campaign that leverages their experience and insight. They hope those that watch the screening join them in calling on city leaders to increase and maintain funding for youth programming and resources.

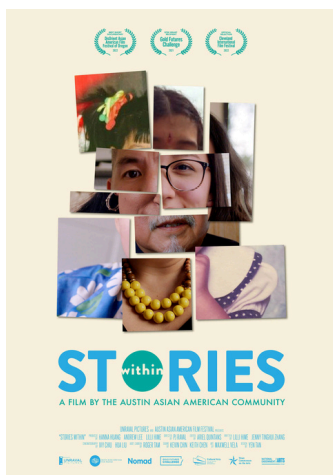
Definition of Resilience | Episode 2 | “Identity” (2018) -

11 min

Mic Jordan and Tall Paul share personal stories around identity. We find out how, despite growing up without a parental figure, struggling with alcohol or dealing with anxiety, they became the role models they wanted as kids.



Directed by: **Alexis Sallee & Tomás Karmelo Amaya**



Directed by: **PJ Raval**

Stories Within (2022) - 10 min

Stories Within delves into a diverse cross section of 14 individuals from the AAPI community in Austin. It allows each participant the opportunity to speak to their younger selves about the acts of racism and discrimination they'll face and messages of empowerment to bring with them to the present. The series shatters the notion that Asian Americans have homogenous experiences and backgrounds. Stories Within is a community-led and created project from Austin, TX created in the aftermath of the March 2021 Georgia Asian Spa Shootings and during a heightened time of the pandemic-related rise in hate crimes against Asians.

Takeover (2021) - 38 min

Takeover explores the twelve historic hours on July 14, 1970, in which fifty members of the Young Lords Party stormed the dilapidated Lincoln Hospital in the South Bronx, drove out their administrative staff, barricaded entrances and windows, and made their cries for decent healthcare known to the world. They raised the Puerto Rican flag atop the building, as well as a banner reading “The People’s Hospital” – a nom de guerre still used today. Through archival footage, seamless reenactments, and modern-day interviews, we follow the Young Lords’ resistance against institutions curated by wealth and white supremacy, and their fight for the most basic of human rights: the right to accessible, quality healthcare.



Directed by: **Emma Francis-Snyder**

Movement Makers: *Feature Film*



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER/WRITER: **DR. THOMAS LAVEIST** | 2020 | 47 MIN

In the United States Black Americans live sicker and die younger than any other ethnic group in the nation. Compared to their White counterparts, Black Americans are twice as likely to die of complications from diabetes, 65% more likely to die from prostate cancer, 48% more likely to die from breast cancer, and 50% more likely to have hypertension. There is a five-to-six-year life expectancy gap between Black and White Americans.

Why is this happening? The Skin You're In docufilm series investigates this disturbing phenomenon from various angles. We identify the problem, explain the causes, and offer real solutions. Through discussions with leading health experts and researchers we bring light to the realities of the issue, and we highlight health problems firsthand in the everyday lives of Black families telling their stories. We meet extraordinary individuals who are indeed valued health experts — people taking positive action to heal their lives, their families, and their communities.

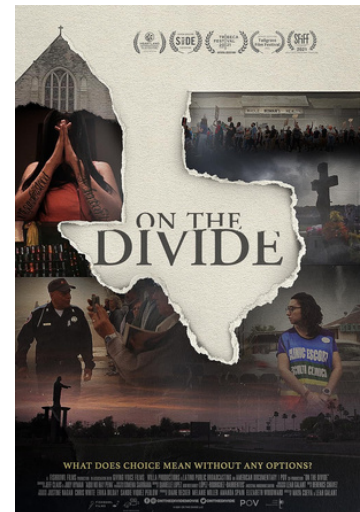
DAY 2: The Power of Choice

Monday, April 7th

4:45PM - 9:00PM

On the second day, we turn our focus to the power of individual and collective decision-making in the face of systemic constraints. The films explore how access, policy, and social norms shape health, identity, and justice—and how people challenge these structures to carve out their own paths.

The feature film, **On the Divide**, examines the complex realities of reproductive rights in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, offering an unflinching look at the intersections of faith, choice, and survival. Following the screening, filmmaker **Maya Cueva** will join us for a conversation about capturing deeply personal and politically charged narratives.



Among the short films, **Smells Like** explores the fight for clean air in Harris County, Texas, where residents have long faced life-threatening pollution from nearby oil refineries and petrochemical plants. A discussion with filmmaker **Casey Beck** will follow.

Moderators: Lisa Hooper & Dr. Martha Silva

The Power of Choice: *Shorts Program*



Directed by: **Jen Dev**

Hidden Barriers | Health Care's Invisible Minority (2021) - 6 min 53 sec

Asian Americans are perceived as the "model minority:" wealthier, better educated and healthier than other minority groups. But this preconception hides many health disparities, in some cases worse than those of any other racial group.

Sol in the Garden (2023) - 21 min

After 16 years of incarceration, Sol is released from prison when she discovers that coming into her own freedom can be as challenging as living behind bars. Through a community gardening collective of formerly incarcerated horticulturalists in East Oakland, Sol strives to recover her humanity and sense of self.



Directed by: **Débora Souza Silva & Emily Cohen Ibañez**

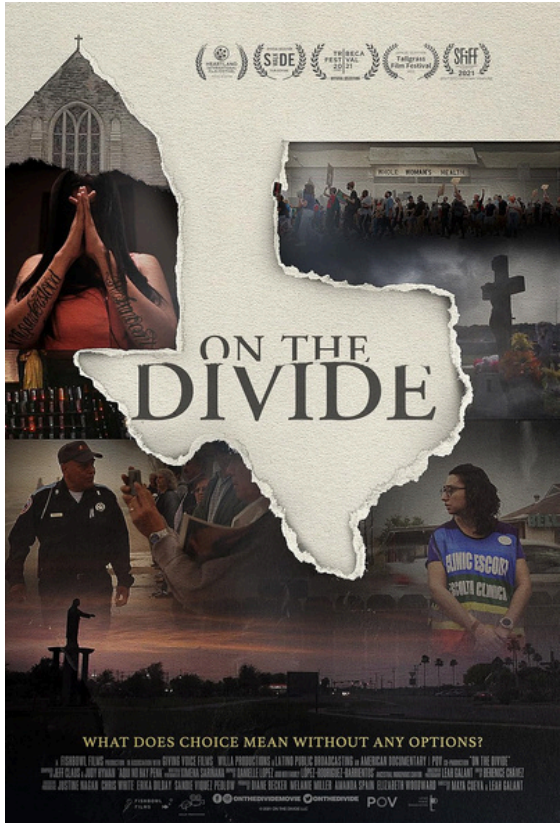


Directed by: **Casey Beck**

Smells Like (2022) - 15 min 41 sec

For decades, residents of Harris County, Texas, have endured life-threatening air pollution from oil refineries and petrochemical plants. This short documentary portrays the neighborhoods that border oil refineries and a determined activist, Juan Flores, who fights for clean air for his community.

The Power of Choice: *Feature Film*



DIRECTOR: **MAYA CUEVA & LEAH GALANT** | 2021 | 1 HR 19 MIN

ON THE DIVIDE follows the story of three Latinx people living in McAllen, Texas who, despite their views, are connected by the most unexpected of places: the last abortion clinic on the U.S./Mexico border. As threats to the clinic and their personal safety mount, our three characters are forced to make decisions they never could have imagined.

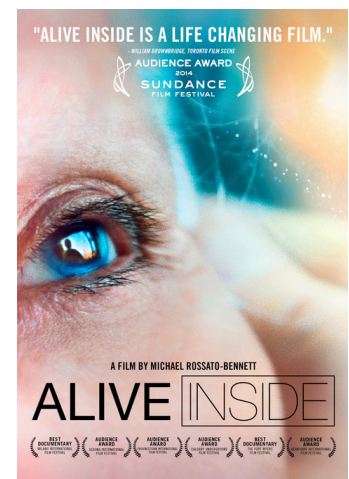
DAY 3: The Power of Storytelling

Tuesday, April 8th

4:45PM - 9:00PM

The closing night highlights storytelling as a tool for transformation, healing, and social change. The selected films amplify voices that are often overlooked, offering deeply personal and visually stunning narratives that challenge perceptions and inspire action.

The evening's feature film, **Alive Inside**, explores the remarkable power of music in unlocking memory, identity, and connection for individuals with dementia. Director **Michael Rossato-Bennett** will join us for a Q&A, sharing his journey in making the film and discussing how storytelling can shift perspectives on aging, care, and human dignity.



The program also features Enclave: Mar, Marasmo, Maravilla, a visually poetic short film by acclaimed Mexican hip-hop artist, scholar, and filmmaker Bocafloja. Known for his multidisciplinary approach to storytelling, Bocafloja will join us for a discussion on the intersections of culture, history, and identity in his work.

Moderator: Dr. Mieka Smart

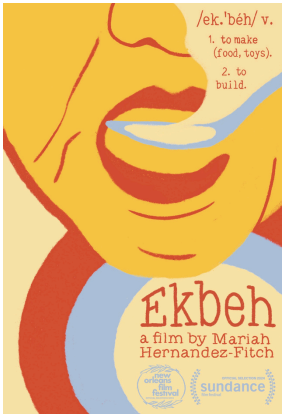
The Power of Storytelling: *Shorts Program*

Student Social Video Presentations: Public Health Is... - 1 min

In this short-form social media video, Tulane students explain the relation between bird flu and egg prices.



Video by: **Sumaira Lalani & Albarissa Abdalla**
Tulane CSWSPHTM



Ekbeh (2023) - 9 min

A chef learns to prepare their family's traditional gumbo recipe and shares stories about their grandparents to preserve Indigenous heritage.

Directed by: **Mariah Hernandez-Fitch**

Imelda is Not Alone (2023) - 31 min

A citizen's movement dares to defend women who are persecuted by the total ban on abortion in El Salvador. A young woman, Imelda Cortez, arrives at the emergency room bleeding after giving birth in a latrine. She is handcuffed to her hospital bed and faces 20 years in prison, accused in first instance of having an abortion. This is her story.



Directed by: **Paula Heredia**

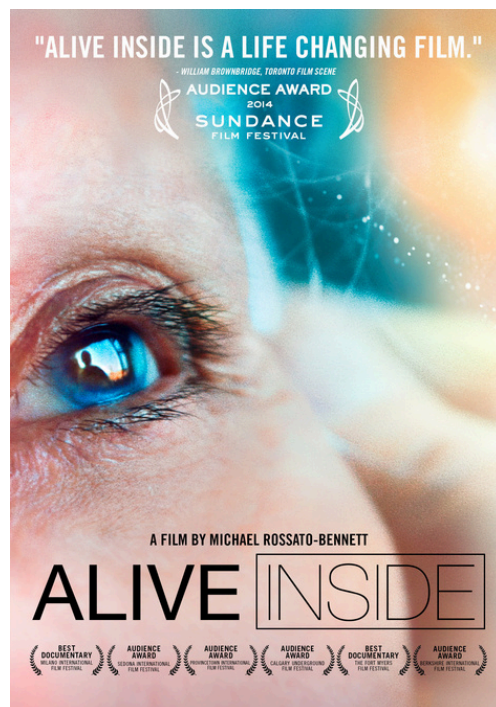


Enclave: Mar, Marasmo, Maravilla (2024) - 21 min 52 sec

EnClave, an Azul original documentary by Bocaflaja, explores the historical and geopolitical factors involved in the extensive extraction of our ocean and its impact on social life. The film exposes environmental racism through music, dance, and storytelling to bring viewers through to see the paramount social injustices that cannot be dismissed, but must be addressed to advance climate action.

Directed by: **Bocaflaja**

The Power of Storytelling: *Feature Film*



DIRECTOR: **MICHAEL ROSSATO-BENNETT** | 2014 | 1 HR 18 MIN

ALIVE INSIDE is a joyous cinematic exploration of music's capacity to reawaken our souls and uncover the deepest parts of our humanity. Filmmaker Michael Rossato-Bennett chronicles the astonishing experiences of individuals around the country who have been revitalized through the simple experience of listening to music. His camera reveals the uniquely human connection we find in music and how its healing power can triumph where prescription medication falls short.

This stirring documentary follows numerous visionaries fighting against a broken healthcare system, trying to demonstrate music's ability to combat memory loss and restore a deep sense of self to those suffering from it. Rossato-Bennett visits family members who have witnessed the miraculous effects of personalized music on their loved ones, and offers illuminating interviews with experts including renowned neurologist and best-selling author Oliver Sacks (*Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*), healthcare visionaries Dr. Bill Thomas, Dr. Al Powers, Naomi Fiel, and musician Bobby McFerrin ("Don't Worry, Be Happy").

An uplifting cinematic exploration of music and the mind, ALIVE INSIDE's inspirational and emotional story left audiences humming, clapping and cheering at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award.

FILMMAKERS & SPEAKERS



DR. THOMAS LAVEIST

**EXECUTIVE
PRODUCER/WRITER**

THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

Thomas A. LaVeist, Ph.D. was appointed Dean of the Tulane Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans, LA in 2018. He was previously Chairman of the Department of Health Policy & Management at the George Washington University, Milken Institute School of Public Health between 2016-2018. He joined GWU after 25 years on the faculty of Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health where he was the William C. & Nancy F. Richardson Professor in Health Policy and Director of the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities Solutions. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, his doctorate degree in medical sociology from the University of Michigan and postdoctoral fellowship in public health at the Michigan School of Public Health.



CARRIE MOULDER

**COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER
(VIOLENCE PREVENTION
INSTITUTE)**

THIS IS NEW ORLEANS

With a communications career spanning over 22 years, Carrie Moulder is an experienced writer, graphic designer, project manager, and strategist dedicated to building, enhancing, extending, and protecting an organization's brand. Projects she's managed range from software training manuals for ship design to product launches for on-site drug testing devices to marketing plans for the city's first and only diaper bank. She received a Master's in Liberal Arts from Tulane University in 2012 and began working there in 2019. Prior to that, she spent six years before joining Tulane overseeing communications and operations for the Junior League of New Orleans, a nonprofit organization of 2100 women dedicated to improving the Greater New Orleans area. Carrie has a Master of Social Work degree, which she leverages to create trauma-aware communications, raise awareness about mental health, equity, and social justice, and coordinate community outreach.



**MODERATOR:
GIAN SMITH**
Poet, Filmmaker, Cultural Curator

FILMMAKERS & SPEAKERS



CASEY BECK
DIRECTOR
SMELLS LIKE

Casey Beck is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, producer, and photographer. Her debut short film *Mongolia: Land Without Fences* premiered online on FRONTLINE/World in 2007. After completing a Fulbright scholarship in Argentina, she was the First Unit Director of *Ballplayer: Pelotero*, a New York Times' Critics Pick. She was a recent finalist for the KQED Homemade Film Festival and has produced films for NowThis, MTV, and The Documentary Channel (Pivot). Casey premiered her feature documentary directorial debut *The Organic Life* at the 36th Mill Valley Film Festival in 2013. The film won Best Documentary Feature at the Santa Cruz Film Festival and was broadcast online on Hulu, FoodMattersTV, Amazon, and iTunes. Her two films about water contamination, *Downstream* (2018) and *The Great Divide* (2020), have won numerous awards and screened around the globe. The films were published in tandem with investigative journalistic pieces by the Investigative Reporting Workshop and YaleE360. She now teaches at Tulane University in New Orleans.



MAYA CUEVA
DIRECTOR
ON THE DIVIDE

Maya is a Latina award-winning director and producer with a background in documentary, radio, and audio producing. She is a Netflix Nonfiction Director and Producer fellow and was recently listed on DOC NYC's "40 Under 40 Filmmakers" co-presented by HBO Documentary Films. Maya's work has been featured on *The New Yorker*, NPR's "All Things Considered," "Latino USA," *The Atlantic*, *Teen Vogue*, and *National Geographic*. She received a student Emmy for her short film *THE PROVIDER* and her feature film, *ON THE DIVIDE*, premiered in the documentary competition at Tribeca Film Festival in 2021. Her most recent short documentary *ALE LIBRE* was acquired by *The New Yorker* and was selected to screen at several Oscar qualifying festivals, including Big Sky Documentary Festival, Hot Docs, Aspen Film Festival, and SFFILM. Maya's feature documentary *ON THE DIVIDE* will be broadcast on POV on PBS in Spring 2022.



MODERATOR:
LISA HOOPER
Head of Media Services
Howard-Tilton Memorial
Library at Tulane



MODERATOR:
DR. MARTHA SILVA
Program Director, Assistant
Professor at Tulane
CSWSPHTM

FILMMAKERS & SPEAKERS



BOCAFLOJA

DIRECTOR

***ENCLAVE: MAR,
MARASMO, MARAVILLA***

Bocafloja is an Interdisciplinary artist and curator based in Georgia, US; Documentary Filmmaking, Music, Literature, Photography, and Design are some of his mediums of creation. He has performed extensively for over 25 years in more than 35 countries, positioning him as a leading voice within artistic communities in the Spanish speaking diaspora, being recognized as one of the first artists in Latin America who utilized Rap and Poetry as an effective model of critical pedagogy amongst impoverished and racialized communities. Bocafloja is the founder of Quilomboarte; an artist collective and cultural production platform that facilitates space for co-creation and synergy between racialized artists from the Global South embracing anti-colonial political traditions and epistemologies.



**MICHAEL ROSSATO-
BENNETT**

DIRECTOR

ALIVE INSIDE

Michael Rossato-Bennett is the Writer, Director and Producer of "Alive Inside" - winner of the 2014 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award for U.S. Documentary - and through film he strives to incite conversations that interrogate issues related to cultural consciousness. In addition to "Alive Inside", his first feature length documentary offering, Rossato-Bennett has several documentaries in various stages of development, through his production company, Projector Media. Each of those projects is inspired by Michael's dedication to the collective well being of society and progressive human change towards the greater, if not greatest, good.



MODERATOR:

DR. MIEKA SMART

**Deputy Director of the Health
Equity Institute at Tulane
CSWSPHTM**

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Chair of Cultural Research and
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Assistant Director, Immersions &
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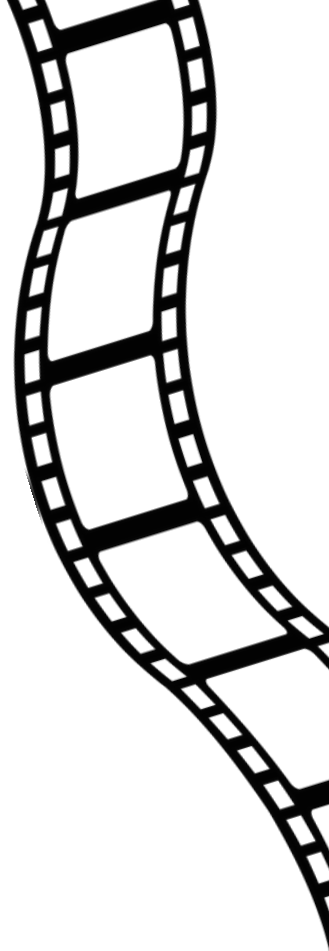
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