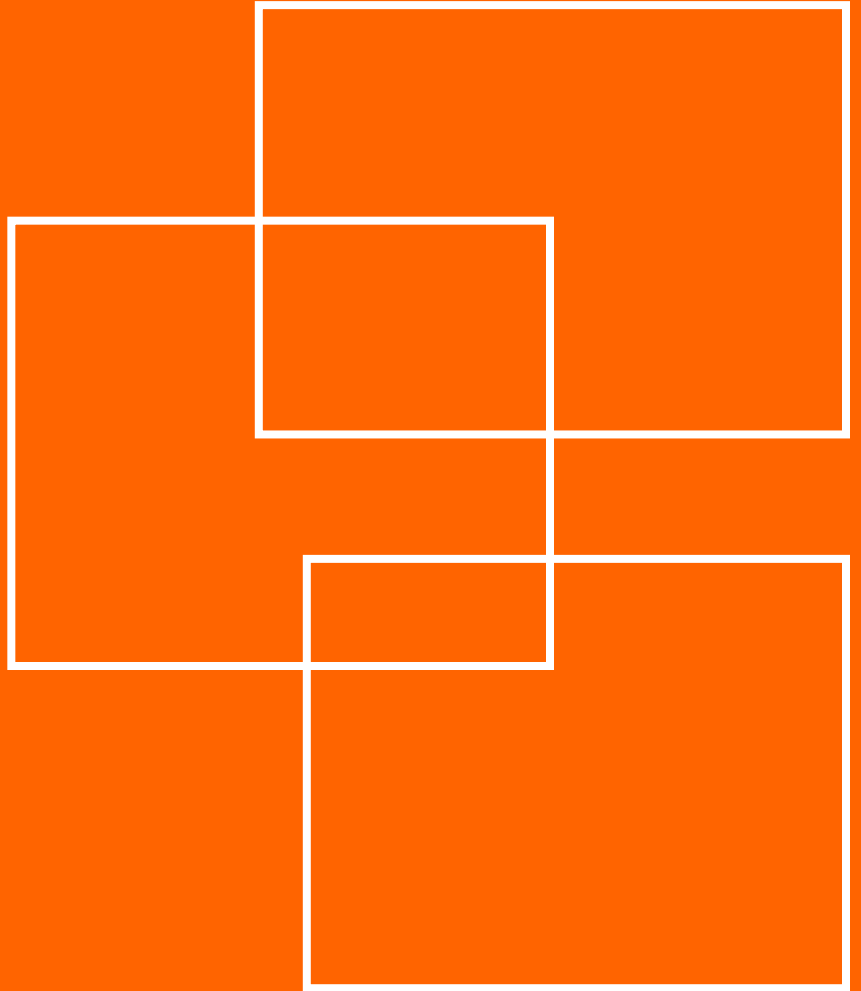


BAMMS

Bay Area
Media Maker
Summit



bammsummit.org

We love **film and media.**
We love the **Bay Area.**
We want **media makers**
to **thrive here.**

The Bay Area Media Maker Summit (BAMMS) was formed in 2021 as a collective to create a more inclusive and sustainable ecosystem for media makers in the Bay Area. Our founding team was inspired by the South Summit produced by the New Orleans Film Society. Aiming to adapt their model of learning and connecting as a region for our Bay Area media making community, that continues to shift and change through the pandemic, the racial reckoning, political distrust and violence, and extreme economic inequities. We set out to create BAMMS in community with an expansive group of media makers and organizations, to forge intergenerational relationships, and to convene activities in San Francisco and the East Bay (the latter to disabuse the notion that film and media making is only active in San Francisco County and does not extend to Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Marin, Solano, Sonoma, Napa, and Santa Cruz counties).

**“Media makers are
vital storytellers..”**

Media makers are vital storytellers — sparking dialogue, bridging social divides, and imagining new possibilities. Building a career and/or artistic practice in film and media can be daunting. It usually requires advanced training, significant financial resources, collaboration with several other artists, lots of time, and trial and error. Without support, media makers can easily get overwhelmed and left behind — especially media makers of color, women and gender expansive people, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ identifying individuals.

The purpose of this document is to summarize the first year of BAMMS as we begin to map the path forward in weaving a stronger Bay Area wide system of resources and support. We are grateful to the Kenneth Rainin Foundation for providing seed funding to this initiative, to co-founding organizations The Roxie Theater and BAVC Media for providing in-kind staffing and facility resources, and to the founding team that includes independent filmmakers, film festival programmers, artist development program managers, and nonprofit organization leaders.

What's special about film and media making in the Bay Area?

From a bird's eye view, the Bay Area film and media ecosystem can be characterized in a few ways.

We're a hub for non-fiction storytelling — especially social issue films and media — and experimental media. With the former, this area of strength has grown from groundbreaking independents (too numerous to name here) and the evolution of local funding, exhibition, and training institutions over the past six decades. And the latter — experimental media in the Bay Area — is rooted in counter-culture organizations like Ant Farm, Survival Research Laboratories, innovative collectives and artists, and a host of other local institutions.

Bay Area production companies, studios and film festivals have been instrumental in the motion picture industry. The Saul Zaentz Film Center, American Zoetrope, LucasFilm and Pixar have birthed not only generations of international blockbusters, but new industries, technology, and practices. The San Francisco International Film Festival, Frameline, the Jewish Film Festival, and the Center for Asian American Media's festival are some of the oldest, largest, and culturally influential film festivals in the country.



Photo: BAMMS team on stage at the 2022 Summit
Photography: Kelly Duong

We've been at the crossroads of art, technology, and mass communication for decades. Early pioneers in visual effects (VFX), virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies have expanded storytelling, distribution, and digital connection – for better and worse, in our backyard.

San Francisco, Oakland, and other locations in the Bay Area are recognizable to global audiences. The Bay Area is showcased for its natural beauty, personal and community narratives, politics, and complexities.

Many artists have chosen to live in the Bay Area as an alternative to living in Los Angeles or New York. Anecdotally, the Bay Area has been perceived as a more humane, less commercial, less cut-throat place to live, build a career, and have a family. Politically, our region and California overall is well-known for supporting progressive values and the arts.

The Bay Area as a lived environment

“ Within this context of natural beauty and connected waterways, our region faces significant housing and economic issues... ”

The geographic area that we call the Bay Area is beloved and contested — located on the ancestral and unceded land of the Ohlone people, the predominant Indigenous group of the Bay Area. Ohlone Tribes in the Bay Area include the Chochenyo and the Karkin in East Bay, the Ramaytush in San Francisco, the Yokuts in South Bay and Central Valley, and the Muwekma Tribe throughout the region. The Pacific Ocean frames the west, with vast beaches, rolling fog, pockets of remaining coastal forests, and iconic landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge and Highway 1. The Bay itself — a mix of salt water from San Francisco and fresh water from multiple rivers — is the largest estuary on the Pacific West Coast. It covers 70 miles of land between the San Francisco coast, south through suburban counties and wetlands, and east to rolling hills and suburban and exurban communities, on its way to the Central Valley.

Within this context of natural beauty and connected waterways, our region faces significant housing and economic issues – including lack of affordable housing, homelessness, gentrification, and late in the pandemic, rapid flight. San Francisco lost 6% of its population in 2020 or nearly 55,000 people (SF Chronicle, May 25, 2022) and almost 8% of Bay Area residents say they plan to leave, more than any other US metro area (SF Chronicle, October 13, 2022). San Francisco ranks third in the nation for income disparity — behind New York and Los Angeles — with the top 95th percentile making \$574,000 a year, compared to the 20th percentile that earns \$53,000 or less. The wealth gap is pervasive and at the forefront of residents’ concerns across all income brackets (SF Chronicle, September 22, 2022).

Gathering Data, Forming our Agenda

Prior to building a program calendar, BAMMS gathered data about current media makers residing and working in the Bay Area via a digital survey and focus groups.

Focus Groups

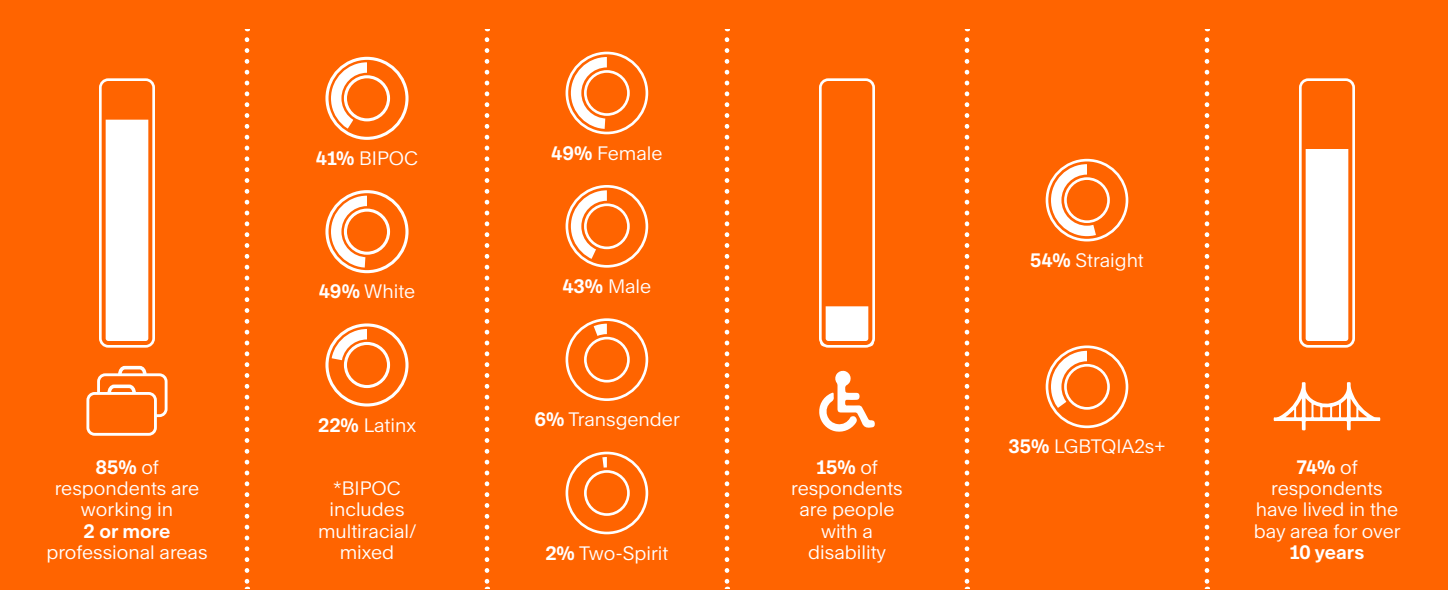
We conducted three focus groups to gather information in a conversational manner. Participants included 15 independent film and media makers at various stages in their careers, and representatives from 20 film and media organizations – including film festivals and funders.

Based on the survey and focus group results, BAMMS set out to address the following issues:

- **Reducing** barriers between media makers and industry decision-makers. “Gatekeeping” is a term used to describe how decision-makers overtly or inadvertently use their power to limit who gets access to resources and opportunities, often with clear biases. Gatekeeping was cited by survey and focus respondents as a concern or problem in the Bay Area film and media scene.
- **Increasing** opportunities for narrative (fiction) filmmakers to access resources and advance their careers. Narrative filmmakers frequently leave the Bay Area to move to Los Angeles or New York.
- **Increasing** opportunities for film and media makers outside of directors and producers — including cinematographers, audio engineers, and editors.
- **Supporting** the sustainability of media and film makers overall. This topic highlighted several related issues: gentrification and the high cost of living, the need for more major film productions in the Bay Area to create jobs, and the experience of feeling disconnected from peers and networks.

Survey

The survey was completed by over 120 media makers. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain background information about the media makers including their areas of practice, years of experience, years of residence in the Bay Area, and current paid occupation(s) if they differed from their film and media projects. In addition, we used the survey to clarify the purpose and mission of BAMMS.



We distributed the survey through the BAMMS teams' professional networks and community partners. In the future we will seek greater participation from community partners, local universities, production companies, etc., and allocate more time for survey responses. In the future, we also aim to further develop the survey and administer it annually or bi-annually to track longitudinal data. To our knowledge, there is currently no other similar survey of Bay Area media makers in use.

Access to funding and uncertain career sustainability in the Bay Area were cited as survey participants' top concerns (at 71% and 49%, respectively), at all stages of experience.

- Of the **46** people who made **0-25%** of their income from media-making, **76%** were not satisfied with their access to funding.
- Similarly, of the **57** people who make **76-100%** of their income from media-making, **68%** were not satisfied with their access to funding.

In their own words, select respondents stated the following challenges:

“

The cost! Many collaborators I love working with had to **leave due to the cost.**

“

Career sustainability, burnout, retirement, and financial stability.

“

I need the opportunity to work on **funded** documentary projects and more corporate gigs to sustain my livelihood.

“

There is **very little funding** available for narrative and experimental works.

The second biggest concern raised by the survey respondents was lack of engagement with industry professionals. 53% reported feeling unsatisfied.

“

I wish there were more opportunities for **mentorship connections** at the professional level.

“

I feel like I've been creating in sort of a **vacuum as of recent.** I understand it takes time, but I feel I haven't met/encountered many gatekeepers.

Key Activities and Highlights

Pre-program Mixer

During the uncertain days of the Delta COVID variant, BAMMS aimed to hold mixers in Oakland and San Francisco to kick-off our initiative. We were successful in holding the Oakland event at the New Parkway Theater. This was an opportunity to share the purpose of BAMMS and to provide an opportunity for people to interact in-person. Over 60 people attended to engage with one another, find out what we were building, and express interest in the future of the program. For many attendees, it was the first in-person networking event that they had attended since the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

Short Film Programs

BAMMS hosted two short film screenings since its inception, with the goal to uplift, champion, and offer space to Bay Area makers and their collaborators. All films in the program had to be by Bay Area makers or about the Bay Area in order to be considered. Both events were hosted at The Roxie Theater, included a screening, Q&A, and reception; all of the makers were paid a screening fee. In many cases this was the first time their work was screened in a theater and, given the pandemic, it offered them an opportunity to meet with audiences.

October 2021



Photo: Filmmaker Devin Shulz and supporters
Photography: Emily Trinh & Kevin Kelleher



Photo: Filmmaker Jay Gash and her mother
Photography: Emily Trinh & Kevin Kelleher

Short Film Program:

I Want Candy (Lacey Johnson),
When the Garden Comes (Jay Gash)
If You Hum at the Right Frequency
(Daniel Freeman)

About a Home (Daniel Chein &
Elizabeth Lo)
Train Tracks (Patricia Lee)
Sorry I'm Adopted (Devin Schultz)

Fluid Bound (Roberto Fatal)
Unboxing (Ash Verwiell)
Look at the Fish (Ashleigh McArthur)
The Lost (Vincent Cortez)



Photo: On-stage filmmaker Q&A
Photography: Lulu Medina-Alvarez



Photo: Filmmaking teams
Photography: Lulu Medina-Alvarez

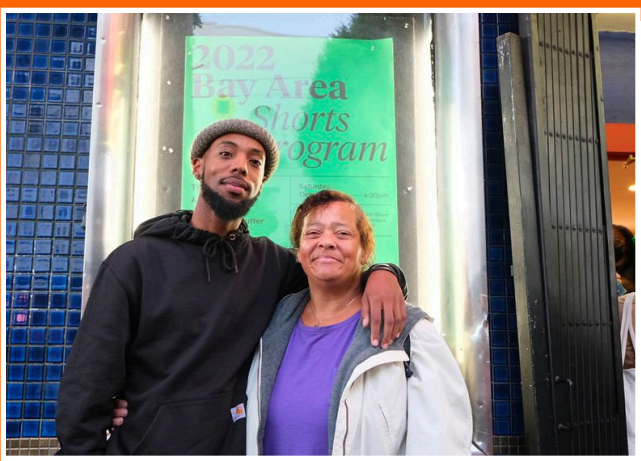


Photo: Emmanuel Blackwell III (Swap Film .Co: Behind the Shutter) and guest
Photography: Lulu Medina-Alvarez



Photo: Guests at filmmaker reception
Photography: Lulu Medina-Alvarez

Short Film Program:

The Interview (Comika Hartford & Torian Allen)

We R Here (Kyung Lee & James "DJ Nyce" Goodwin)

Aparecidas (Yvan Iturriaga)

Soul of the Bay (Najah Bey)

The Oakland Coliseum: Past, Present, and Future (Myah Overstreet & William Jenkins)

Vivi's World (Sarah Soucek & Vivi Draganic)

Coach Emily (Pallavi Somusetty)

Swap Film .Co: Behind the Shutter (Naomi Garcia Pasmanick)

Historias de Cultura: Oaxaca in Santa Cruz (Comida) (Megan Martinez Goltz)

Programming Mentorship

For the second short film program BAMMS started a Programming Mentorship, with a focus on first-time and emerging programmers. Over 20 people applied for the position, resulting in 3 Programmers given the opportunity to screen, review, select, and work with the filmmakers in the final program. The goal was to provide hands-on training and new opportunities for those interested in the field.

The Inaugural Bay Area Media Maker Summit

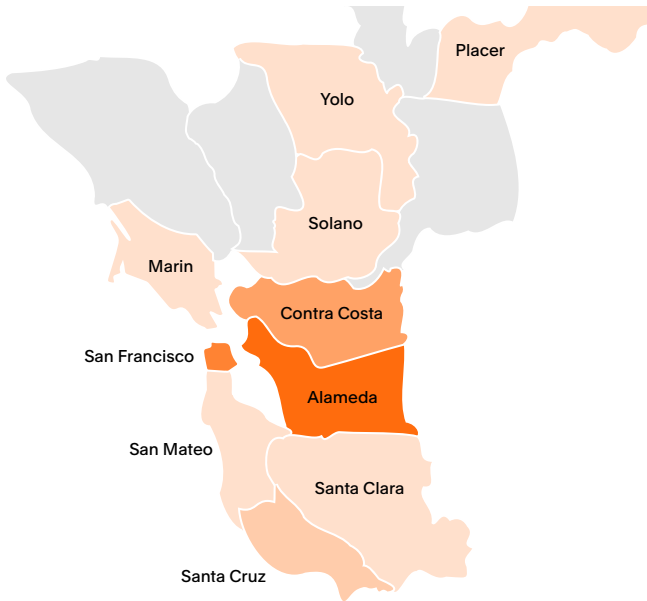
BAMMS hosted our first Summit over the weekend of June 3-5 in various locations in San Francisco and Oakland. The Summit was comprised of peer-led talks, panels and networking opportunities. We held the Summit at the following locations: Ninth Street Independent Film Center, Oakstop (the 2323 Broadway location), KQED, and Golden Gate Park. Sessions were selected through an open “call for proposals” process. Presenters were compensated equitably.



Photo: The Funder and Festival Fair
Photography: Kelly Duong



Photo: Attendees at the Hiring & Collaborating with Documentary Cinematographers session
Photography: Emily Trinh & Kevin Kelleher



Attendance by County:

| | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Alameda 51 (47%) | Solano 2 (2%) |
| San Francisco 37 (34%) | Marin 1 |
| Contra Costa 8 (7%) | Placer 1 |
| Santa Cruz 3 (3%) | San Mateo 1 |
| Santa Clara 2 (2%) | Yolo 1 |
| Los Angeles 2 (2%) | |

The following sessions were presented:

Professional Storytelling: Developing Your Schtick (aka telling your personal filmmaker story in a professional setting)

What makes your filmmaker story compelling and memorable? Media makers honed their story in the company of local peers and guest moderators Josh Healey of Offsides Productions and Sapana Sakya of the Center for Asian American Media. Included happy hour refreshments.

Hiring & Collaborating with Documentary Cinematographers

Presented by the Collective of Documentary Women Cinematographers, this session was about hiring and working with women and nonbinary documentary cinematographers in the Bay.

Making Movies is Hard: Fireside Chat

Hosted by the popular filmmaking podcast Making Movies is HARD!!! A discussion with award-winning local filmmaker Marc Smolowitz about the nitty gritty of making your first feature.

Film Festival + Funder Fair (Lunch included)

An opportunity for media makers to meet with local film festivals, grant giving organizations, and industry professionals in a casual environment over lunch.

Breakout Session: Interactive Sound

This session explored sound effects and enhancing narrative through sound design and psychoacoustics.

Equity in the Edit Room: Attaining Inclusion & Diversity in Your Projects

This panel explored how diversity and inclusion in the edit room is vital to your participants/characters, your story, and your project as a whole.

Crewing up with Intention: Inclusion, Diversity and Mentorship

Moderated by Dawn Valadez co-hosted by the Bay Area Women Directors Collective, this workshop helped filmmakers and funders embed concepts of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging across our making practices.

Hybrid Filmmaking

Facilitated by Rodrigo Reyes, this workshop was for lovers of the art of non-fiction who wanted to learn about how to strengthen their process, support directors taking risks, and learn to build hybrid cinematic visions.

The Power of Personal Documentary: The Creators

Facilitated by Jennifer Crystal Chien and a filmmaker panel, this session reviewed highlights from a Re-Present Media study that looks at the relationship between emerging BIPOC filmmakers, personal storytelling, and the dynamics of white supremacy culture in the industry.

The Return of The Bay Area Lamb & Rum Fest

To conclude BAMMS 2022, and to bring the filmmaking community back together after the rough pandemic period and celebrate. Hosted by George Rush.



Photo: The Hiring with Intention Panel: Inclusion, Diversity and Mentorship
Photography: Kelly Duong



Photo: The Power of Personal Documentary: The Creators
Photography: Lulu Medina-Alvarez

Highlights at a Glance

- **320 people** registered to attend the BAMMS Summit. We estimate that 250 people attended one or more of the activities.
- **32 film and media organizations and businesses** participated in the BAMMS Summit. They included: Frameline, Arab Film & Media Institute/Arab Film Festival, Jewish Film Institute, SFFILM, Berkeley Film Foundation, Actual Films, KRF, Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival, SF Dance Film Festival, Drunken Film Fest, United Nations Film Festival, Coven Film Festival, BAVC Media, RePresent Media, Watsonville Film Festival, The Roxie Theater, Oakland Film Center, Catapult Films, Shapeshifters Cinema, Center for Asian American Media, Cinema SF (Balboa, Vogue, 4 Star), New Parkway, Cine+Mas, ITVS, California Film Institute (CAFILM)/Mill Valley Film Festival, The Redford Center, California Humanities, SF Urban Film Fest, Color Congress, International Documentary Association (IDA), Offside Productions, and the Collective of Bay Area Women Cinematographers.
- **Students and recent graduates** from several local and out-of-area university film programs attended including those from UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, and Stanford University.

As we gear up for BAMMS in 2023, we aim to iterate upon a number of activities to increase positive outcomes. Some of these include:

- **Expanding** our organizing team to include more members to increase diverse perspectives and to share the mostly volunteer labor.
- **Increasing** our collaborative outreach and engagement activities with community partners and schools.
- **Increasing** the amount of time allocated for soliciting proposals for BAMMS Summit session leaders.
- **Securing** a larger venue for the BAMMS Summit to accommodate more participants.
- **Improving** upon our operating systems to facilitate smooth event operations and planning.
- **Expanding** geographically to include a BAMMS event in the South Bay, in addition to the East Bay and San Francisco.
- **Continuing** to build upon BAMMS' equitable practices and learning as a collective.



BAMMS FOUNDING TEAM

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