

FirelightMedia

25TH
ANNIVERSARY

LINCOLN CENTER, NYC | NOVEMBER 14, 2025

JOIN US

25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Founded by **Stanley Nelson & Marcia Smith**, Firelight Media has spent a quarter-century championing nonfiction filmmakers of color, building a thriving ecosystem of support through mentorship, funding, & community.

In November 2025, Firelight Media will host its **25th Anniversary Celebration** at Lincoln Center in New York City—an unforgettable celebration of legacy, impact, & the future of nonfiction storytelling.

This event will honor the visionary founders, reflect on Firelight's evolution, & look ahead to its next era under **Loira Limbal's** leadership. The event will be equal parts tribute & launchpad — anchored in gratitude, inspired by legacy, & propelled by the promise of what's to come.

25 YEARS OF STORYTELLING

A LIFETIME OF IMPACT



This work—the work of storytelling—is as urgent now as it was then. Our democracy depends on stories that contextualize the moment in which we’re living, stories that challenge us to be better, to see more clearly, and to act with courage.

If you’re a filmmaker, keep telling your story. Your voice matters. If you fund or commission films, be courageous. Support storytellers with bold, fresh perspectives.

I ask you to join us in celebrating 25 years of changing the story. Support this work. Celebrate it. And let’s imagine together what the next 25 years of storytelling can look like.

Marcia Smith
Co-Founder, Firelight Media

CHANGING THE STORY THROUGH DOCUMENTARIES



Documentary filmmaking is one of our most powerful tools for social change — a force that disrupts, reveals, and reimagines. My work with Firelight Media has only strengthened my conviction in its ability to challenge harmful narratives and sow the seeds of new, transformative ones.

At a time when our field faces unprecedented challenges, it is a privilege to stand alongside Firelight Media's brilliant and dedicated staff, championing filmmakers whose work illuminates our present, preserves our past, and expands the possibilities for our collective future.

Loira Limbal
President & CEO, Firelight Media

OUR WORK



OUR VISION

Firelight Media envisions a world in which filmmakers, artists, & storytellers of color have abundant resources & opportunities to shape & define culture through their own images.

OUR MISSION

Firelight Media's mission is to support the creation, distribution, & impact of documentary media by & about communities of color in all our vibrance & complexity. By providing filmmakers mentorship, funding, & creative development, we seek to advance the art of nonfiction storytelling to realize a more just & beautiful world.

OUR VALUES

Artistic Freedom

We believe documentary filmmakers of color must be free to tell stories that reinterpret the past, illuminate the present, & imagine the future of their cultures & communities.

Authenticity

We prioritize stories that authentically represent the experiences & perspectives of the individuals & communities we serve. Our commitment to equity & inclusion extends to a broad range of racial & cultural identities & other aspects of identity that inform them, such as gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic & immigration status, geographic location, & disability.

Community & Solidarity

By bringing filmmakers from across a broad spectrum of identities together, we aim to foster solidarity in service of liberation for all. We believe solidarity includes community accountability and ethical engagement with the individuals and communities depicted in and impacted by the projects we support.

Excellence

We engender excellence in the projects we support by maintaining high standards of artistic rigor. Artistic excellence is achieved when filmmakers have the trust, support, & resources they need to realize their vision.

Love

Love is the galvanizing force for creating new & better futures for communities of color. Through acts of trust, sustained attention, & mutual respect & appreciation, we foster a community grounded in an ethic of care.



DOCUMENTARY LAB



GROUNDWORK



WILLIAM
GREAVES
R&D FUND

OUR IMPACT



BEYOND RESILIENCE



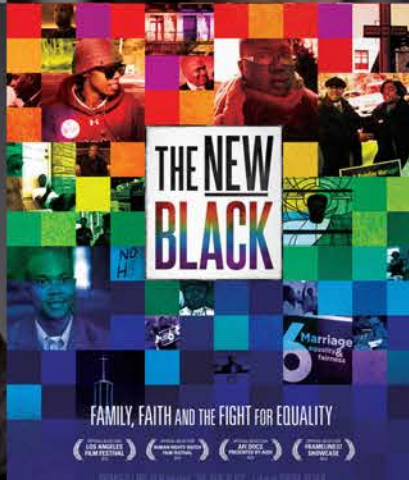
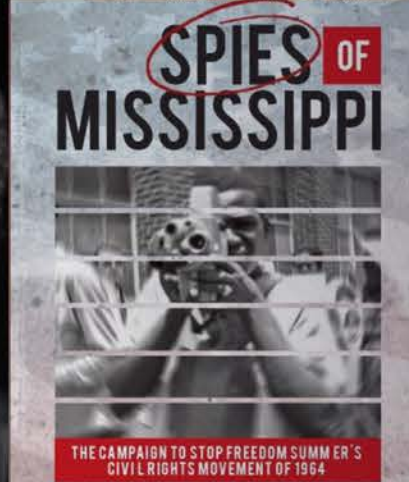
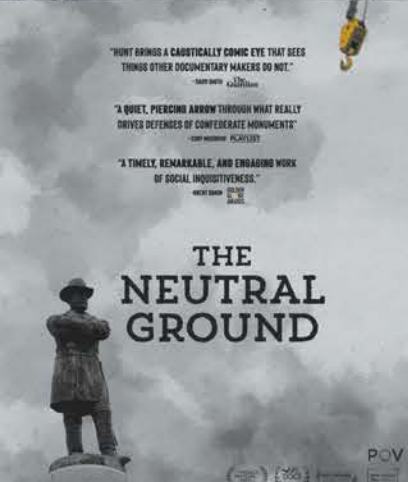
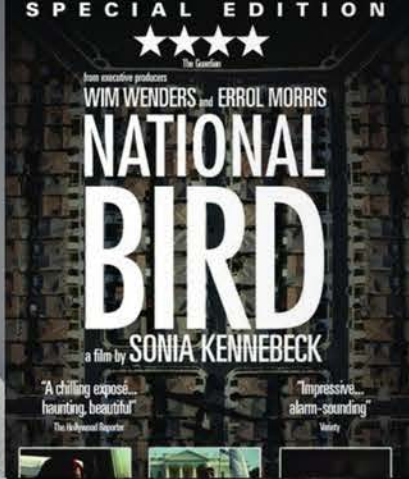
IMPACT CAMPAIGN FUND



SHORT FILM PRODUCTION

DOC LAB

Doc Lab Project Grants of \$25k to support the development of filmmakers first or second feature-length documentary. Notable Documentary Lab alumni include award-winning filmmakers CJ Hunt, Sonia Kennebeck, Jessica Kingdon, Peter Nicks, Dawn Porter, & Yoruba Richen.



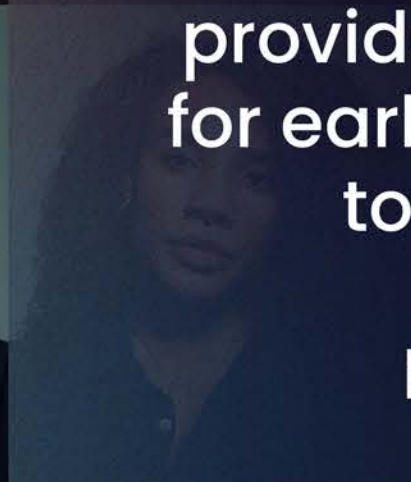
BEYOND RESILIENCE

Beyond Resilience is an Award winning program that engages a global audience of over 20K+ attendees annually across various platforms which offers screenings, essays, & curated conversations that explore the challenges, strategies, & experiences of creating & distributing work during periods of social transformation.



WILLIAM GREAVES R&D FUND

The William Greaves R&D Fund provides project grants of up to \$40K for early-stage funding & mentorship to mid-career BIPOC filmmakers in the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Puerto Rico, & Colombia.



IMPACT CAMPAIGN FUND

The Impact Campaign Fund supports Firelight-supported filmmakers with funding & strategic guidance to design & lead powerful audience engagement campaigns that drive impact in their communities.



A FILM BY KEVIN SHAW

LET THE LITTLE LIGHT SHINE
A CO-PRODUCTION OF SCHOOL FILM LLC, ITVS AND BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA WITH FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS STEVE JAMES SALLY JO FIFER ERIKA DILDAY CHRIS WHITE LESLIE FIELDS CRUZ
ORIGINAL SCORE BY KAHIL EL'ZABAR PRODUCED BY RACHEL DICKSON KEVIN SHAW
DIRECTED BY KEVIN SHAW
LIGHTSHINEFILM.COM

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SHORT FILM PRODUCTION

Firelight produces award-winning documentary short films, including the acclaimed PBS series **Homegrown**, which spotlights BIPOC communities through intimate, locally-rooted stories told by emerging filmmakers across the U.S.



SUSTAINING OUR WORK FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS



As public media infrastructure faces unprecedented disinvestment, Firelight Media is committed to standing firm as a vital institution for nonfiction storytellers of color. We recognize this moment as both a reckoning & a call—to reimagine sustainability, deepen our collective strength, & nurture a more just & resilient documentary field.

Over the next 25 years, Firelight Media will expand its role as a creative & cultural anchor: supporting filmmakers through mentorship, funding, & impact, building lasting networks rooted in solidarity, & uplifting stories that challenge, inspire, & envision new futures. In a time of instability, we choose courage, community, & continuity.



THE FIRELIGHT FUND



FIRELIGHT FUND

As we mark 25 years of Firelight Media, we're launching the Firelight Fund—a bold, long-term investment in BIPOC documentary filmmakers telling urgent stories that advance justice. With traditional funding channels collapsing, the Firelight Fund is a timely intervention to protect & strengthen the BIPOC documentary ecosystem.

FUND OBJECTIVES

This new fund meets filmmakers where they are—from development through distribution—and provides:

- Initial grant sizes will range up to \$50,000 per project, and the inaugural grant cycle will kick off in this fall
- Year-round, responsive funding
- Legal, safety, & impact strategy support
- A focus on filmmakers from communities most affected by political, social, & cultural crises

FUNDRAISING GOAL

\$5 Million



WHY YOUR SPONSORSHIP MATTERS

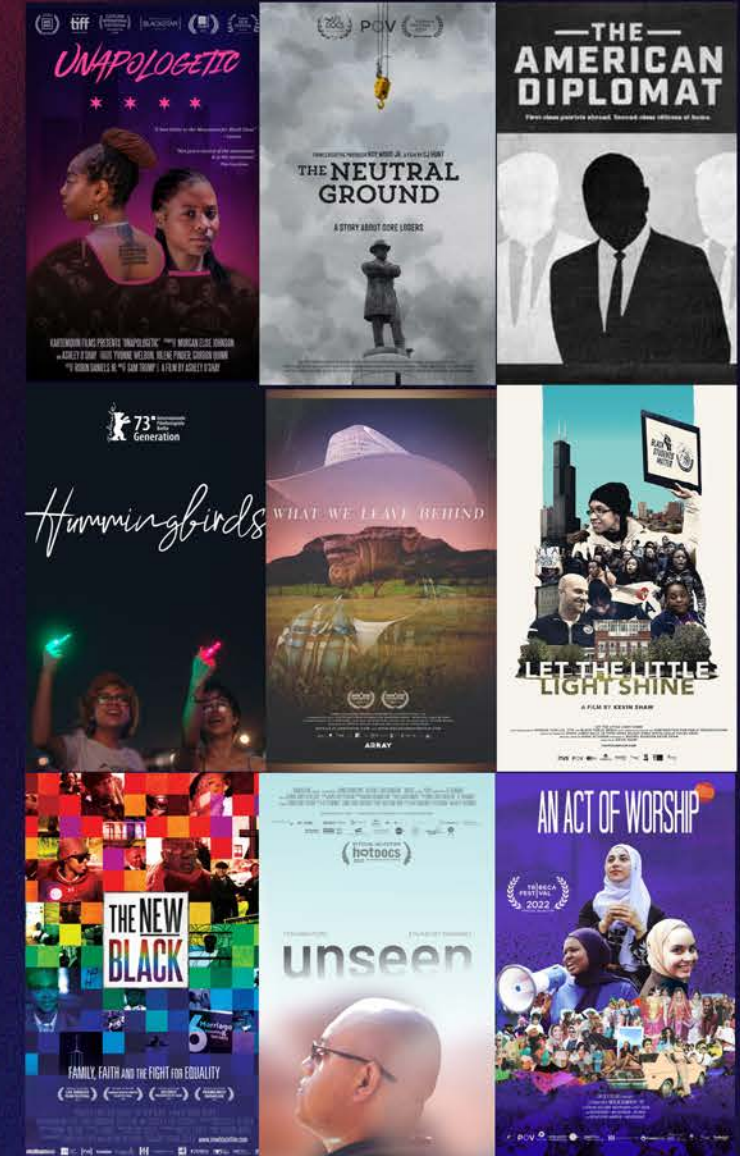


Sponsoring the Firelight Fund means advancing equity in media. Your support enables bold storytellers to bring vital, overlooked narratives to life—driving change & amplifying truth where it's most needed.

These fellows' projects and the breadth and urgency of their subjects speak to Firelight's enduring mission to support underrepresented filmmakers in telling their stories, and the stories of their communities, while advancing the art of documentary.

Lu Mukerjee
Doc Lab Director, Firelight Media

2024-26 DOC LAB FELLOWS



SPONSOR OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CHANGING THE STORY



Presenting Sponsor \$50,000	Visionary Sponsor \$25,000	Storyteller \$10,000	Impact \$5,000	Community \$2,500	Individual Ticket or Sponsor a Filmmaker \$250
Lead sponsorship of the 25th Anniversary Celebration	Recognition as a core supporter of the event & the Firelight Fund Logo included in digital & print materials Recognition on social media & website Includes 10 celebration tickets	Named supporter of the Firelight Fund	Acknowledgment as a supporter of Firelight’s community-centered work	Listed as a celebration supporter online & in select materials	Make it possible for a filmmaker to take part in Firelight’s 25th Anniversary Celebration
Recognition in all event communications & signage		Listing on website & recognition during celebration program	Name/logo on website	Includes 2 celebration tickets	
Opportunity to welcome guests or introduce a filmmaker			Includes 4 celebration tickets		
Featured listing on Firelight’s website & social media					
Includes 14 celebration tickets					

SPONSORSHIP INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



In addition to financial sponsorships, we welcome in-kind & creative partnerships that support our 25th Anniversary Celebration & year-round programs.

In-Kind Partners

- Support with products or services
- Swag bag items, catering, décor printing, or AV
- Receive recognition on-site, in event programs, & online

Program Sponsorship: Beyond Resilience

- Sponsor a future Beyond Resilience panel
- Highlight BIPOC filmmakers & critical cultural issues
- Brand visibility & mission alignment from live streamed panels

Marketing & Media Partners

- Promoting Firelight across your platforms
- Supporting the production of event photos & videos
- We welcome partnerships with media outlets to expand our reach

Custom Collaborations

- Sponsor a filmmaker's attendance
- Match donations
- Co-create a unique partnership aligned with your values

Let's explore meaningful ways to **work together.**

JOIN US IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF DOCUMENTARY STORYTELLING



Become a Partner

Support diverse filmmakers & impactful storytelling.

Sponsor Our Campaign

Help us reach our \$5 million goal for the Firelight Fund.

Engage with Us

Collaborate on initiatives that amplify our stories.

To Donate:



For more information, please contact:

Rachelle Samson, Development Officer, rachelle@firelightmedia.org