



Good Pitch Local Philadelphia | December 4, 2018

PITCHES, PROJECTS AND PRESENTERS

Brief descriptions of selected media makers, organizers and special guests as of November 27 are included here; additional presenters and projects may be added.

MEDIA MAKERS

Media makers are looking for outreach partners, distribution, funding and other resources to complete their projects and ensure they are seen by the best possible audience.

Abortion Hotline

Media maker: Janet Goldwater and Barbara Attie

www.attiegoldwater.com

A short, powerful, advocacy film about how a woman's financial status dangerously affects her ability to control her reproductive life. Since 1976 the Hyde Amendment has blocked Medicaid funding for abortion services, except in cases of rape, incest or threat to a woman's life. Medicaid covers 1 in 5 women of reproductive age in the US. How do women carrying an unwanted pregnancy, already struggling financially come up with funds to terminate their pregnancy? Many call an abortion hotline where private contributions are doled out on a monthly basis. For too many women, getting through to the hotline in time can be life-changing for them and their families. This film tells their stories.

Finding Elijah

Media maker: Yolanda Johnson-Young

A short documentary project exploring the story behind and impact of teen suicide told from a mother's perspective. "Finding Elijah" follows a young man's growing up in Philly from home to college—where he studied filmmaking—to the onset of mental illness, to homelessness, and ultimately to suicide. The search for answers leads his mother Yolanda Johnson-Young to action, as both activist and artist. In the film, Elijah's original art, writing and media helps tell his own story. The filmmaker seeks partnerships with mental health agencies, homeless shelters and social service centers who see storytelling as a tool to help break stigma around this tragic illness.

Hidden Resources

Media maker: El Sawyer

www.ming-media.com

A series of short films that tell the human stories behind the complex web of poverty, institutional racism, and a rapidly changing labor landscape that contribute to the crisis of incarceration. Hosted by El Sawyer, co-founder Media In Neighborhoods Group (MING) which specializes in criminal justice issues and marginalized communities, initial episodes have been shot in San Francisco, with plans for Philly and beyond. At the age of 17, Sawyer was sentenced to 8-20 years in prison. While serving his time, he learned filmmaking, which changed his life. Since his release in 2003, El has traveled the world making films and educating governments and organizations on prison reform, equity, and inclusion. The team seeks support and distribution for the series.

La Lucha Sigue/The Fight Continues

Media Maker: Melissa Beatriz

www.melissabeatriz.com

A short documentary and interactive media project about immigrant rights leaders and grassroots activists in Philadelphia who are also at risk of detention and deportation.

While Philly is a sanctuary city, immigrants still fear being out in public as deportations are on the rise. We follow two undocumented activist families—one in sanctuary at a local church, another that was detained at Berks Detention Center—and show the almost constant state of surveillance under which they live. Notably, Berks Detention Center had been a site that kept innocent children in custody for long-term periods because of a childcare license. When that license expired, it was not renewed by the PA Dept. of Human Services. Yet, the center continues to detain families seeking asylum. Community leaders are pushing the PA Governor to issue an emergency order to close the center. In “La Lucha Sigue” families risk their lives fighting for a world that values human beings above borders, as they work to #ShutDownBerks, #EndFamilyDetention and #AbolishICE.

Places of Power

Media maker: Anula Shetty

<http://www.termite.org/power/>

Places of Power is a portrait of the Fairhill neighborhood in North Philadelphia which has suffered decades of depopulation and disinvestment; every single high school has closed and eighty-six percent of households are below the poverty line. This web-based project uses Google tilt to capture images. In North Philly, there’s a magical penny-candy store that’s only visible to children. To visit, you have to keep an eye out for the flag — faded blue silk, reading “WILL POWER” — flapping above the door of an ordinary rowhome. For 20 years its proprietors Ms. Nandi and Mr. Khalid have sold candy in their living room and taught kids counting, Black history, and self-respect. Over the years, they have taken a photo of every child who entered the penny candy store, creating an archive of neighborhood memories and childhoods. Mapping such nontraditional community access points threads together the people and spaces that hold power in the neighborhood, but are often invisible. Through the project we hope to celebrate and connect these places, thereby multiplying their public safekeeping power.

The Storefront

Media maker: Tony Heriza

www.NewDay.com/filmmaker/184

A short film about the power of creativity and the importance of safe places in serving communities in need from the filmmaker behind “Care” (Good Pitch New York 2015).

The Storefront is a warm and welcoming place on Kensington Avenue in Philadelphia where people from the neighborhood gather for coffee and connection. If they have the energy and inclination, they join in creative writing, weaving, painting, or take part in a musical performance. There are no preconditions, no expectations—just the agreement to treat each other with civility and respect. The Kensington neighborhood has been hit hard by the opioid epidemic, and most media stories about it present a bleak portrait of a community in crisis, and residents trapped in a cycle of addiction. At The Storefront, the troubles of the street recede, replaced by kindness, human connection and the magical powers of art—small but moving reminders of our shared humanity. The film follows several community members for whom creative expression has helped them pull their lives together, so they offer it to others.

Untitled Immigrants Rights Documentary

Media maker: Kristal Sotomayor

www.kristalsotomayor.com

A short film documenting an historic moment for immigrant rights in Philadelphia. Documenting the Latinx immigrant community in South Philadelphia as they work to pass historic immigrant rights policies. The filmmaker focused on Juntos (together) an organization that works with the community to propose, draft, and pass sanctuary city policies. This short film shot between March and November 2018 includes the moment in July when the community succeeded with Mayor Jim Kenney announcing the end of the agreement between the Philadelphia police and ICE, becoming the very first city in the country to terminate this policy of information sharing. Weaving together interviews and observational footage, the film will provide an intimate insight into activism in Philadelphia.

Witness

Media maker: Marie Alarcón

www.mariealarcon.com/witness

A multimedia project that uses new technology to capture both history and contemporary reality, "Witness" is an exploration of the hidden histories and erasures being undertaken in Philadelphia communities of color, from the Black Bottom to the Top of the Bottom, from Bartrams Village to Sharswood. Alarcón's art focuses on the silent historical relationships embedded in geography through sound collage, movement, & performance and use digital manipulation and animation with an interest in developing a tactile relationship to the hyper-real. The project uses a combination of available statistical data, personal narratives, and historical accounts through augmented Reality and Web VR. They currently perform and exhibits work both as a solo artist and in collaboration with various artists and institutions.

COMMUNITY LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Community organizers seek creative partners, media makers, and resources, from story strategy to production and distribution support in order to bring these urgent local stories to local audiences, and beyond.

Amistad Law Project

Presented by: Kris Henderson, Nikki Grant & Saleem Wasi

www.AmistadLaw.org

The Amistad Law Project is a West Philadelphia-based public interest law center, it's mission is to fight for the human rights of people in their community by providing free and low-cost legal services to Philadelphians and those incarcerated in Pennsylvania prisons. Amistad is working to abolish death by incarceration, more commonly known as life without parole. Pennsylvania has more people serving death by incarceration than every state except Florida. Over half of those people are from Philadelphia. The team wants to start a podcast where they will interview people who are currently serving death by incarceration, those who have been released, their loved ones and organizers working to end this sentencing practice and policymakers who have introduced legislation to reform it.

Black & Brown Workers Cooperative

Presented by: Darren Wallace

www.BlackandBrownWorkersCoop.org

The Black and Brown Workers Co-Op's mission is to actively challenge, resist and dismantle systems of oppression that adversely impact the Black and Brown worker. A documentary in progress follows the BBWC as it organizes with community members towards the aim of community control over public space. In the midsts of public actions, aesthetic interventions, disruptions, workshops, town halls etc. Highlighting residents' narratives that highlight the multilayered violence that gentrification/displacement engenders. And uplifts those most impacted by gentrification by centering their experiences while respecting their humanity and agency enough to not revel in their trauma for sentimentality.

Broad Street Ministry

Presented by: Michael Dahl

www.BroadStreetMinistry.org

Broad Street Ministry provides radical hospitality to our most vulnerable neighbors. We believe that there should be a seat at the table for everyone and the simplest acts of kindness can be transformative. If hunger, homelessness and poverty are the symptoms of forgetting we belong to each other, and if prejudice, tribalism and a misguided moral superiority are the fruits of placing ourselves above the other in our society, then places like Broad Street Ministry are what can happen when we remember and treasure our common humanity. (BSM), a leading meal and services provider to Philadelphia's most vulnerable populations. During a time of division and selfishness, we believe that places like Broad Street Ministry provide an important counterpoint that unconditional love can in the end triumph. Seeking a media maker to capture the transformative power of radical hospitality.

Girls Rock Philly

Presented by: Samantha Rise & Melanie Hsu

www.girlsrockphilly.org

Girls Rock Philly has been building a community of girls, women, and trans and gender non-conforming people through music mentorship, the practice of fearless expression, artistic experimentation, and collaboration, since 2006. They are focused on re-orienting the organization's mission to better represent the intersectional community which they serve, specifically on raising the voices of trans and gender variant youth in Philadelphia. As they combine the myriad identities with the transformative power of music, they want to tell their story so that young folks and adults alike can find the organization and find their voices within this work.

Project Maroso

Presented by: Sinta Penyami Storm

www.Modero.co

Artist and organizer Sinta Storm has been doing traditional Indonesian dance since she was a child. She founded the Modero Dance Company in order share her knowledge and present this essential aspect of Indonesian culture as means to celebrate and strengthen community in the vibrant Indonesian diaspora in South Philadelphia. The work also provides a safe space for folks to freely expressing themselves and connect with each other regardless of background, social or immigrant status and religious differences. The dance performances, which often includes Indonesian food as well are a model for cultural expression as a means to engage community and address critical issues facing the community including immigration, cross-racial solidarity, public health, intergenerational relationships, and governance.

The ReEntry Think Tank; a project of The People's Paper Co-op

Presented by: Courtney Bowles & Mark Strandquist

<http://reentrythinktank.com>

The Reentry Think Tank connects men and women in reentry with artists, advocates, and policy stakeholders, to transform the stereotypes, social services, and political platforms that impact our lives and communities. For each of the biannual cohorts, Think Tank fellows are nominated by organizations from across Philadelphia. Their new initiative The Media Justice Fellowship, will train, fund, and support 10 formerly incarcerated individuals to create a series of media pieces addressing the issues and challenges of reentry. By merging art and journalism, peer-led research, and legal advocacy, they hope to show how siloed practices and communities can come together to create change on personal, community, and systemic levels.

Urban Creators

Presented by: Jeaninne Kayembe

www.phillyurbancreators.org

Urban Creators is a black and brown-led collective of diverse individuals who steward the Life Do Grow Farm. Since 2010 they have focused on employment and engagement to combat violent crime in their neighborhood in North Philadelphia. Their new campaign brings together their anti-violence and environmental justice work to help to educate the community on these issues. They are not only farmers, but artists and want to use the makeshift recording studio they built on the farm to offer an outlet to budding musicians on the farm, especially young people mourning friends & family lost to gun violence. They want to make a music video about this emerging strategy of creating to educate on non-violence and eco-friendly practices.

Why Not Prosper

Presented by: Reverend Michelle Simmons

www.WhyNotProsper.org

This grassroots nonprofit provides programs and services that help women make a smooth transition back into society following incarceration. Programs include: pre-release mentoring to incarcerated women, residential services at Why Not Prosper House and community services at Resource Center located in Philadelphia PA. Executive Director and Founder Rev. Simmons is formerly incarcerated woman knows first hand the importance of giving women a hand up, not a hand out. The Organization is developing a new initiative to provide transition kits for women exiting prison. They seek help telling their story and reaching those who can offer volunteer services and support for their constituents.

GOOD IDEAS / FEATURED SPEAKERS

[Knight AmDoc Patron Fund on Kickstarter](http://www.kickstarter.com/patrons/amdoc)

www.kickstarter.com/patrons/amdoc

Presented by Alice Quinlan & Keisha Salmon for AmDOC / POV and Elise McCave for Kickstarter. This unique curated funding partnership between Kickstarter and American Documentary/POV funded by the Knight Foundation makes available up to \$10,000 for nonfiction media projects by makers in Knight foundation communities—including Philadelphia—as part of Kickstarter campaigns.

[Resolve Philly \(The Reentry Project, Broke in Philly\)](http://www.resolvephilly.org)

www.resolvephilly.org

Presented by Jean Friedman-Rudovsky and Cassie Haynes, Co-Executive Directors

Resolve Philadelphia aims to shift the narratives on complex social issues through collaborative solutions journalism, redesigning community conversations, and elevating the voices of those closest to the problem.

[Scribe Video Center: Precious Places Community History Project](http://www.Scribe.org)

www.Scribe.org

Presented by Louis Massiah, Founder/Director

The *Precious Places Community History Project* is a community oral history project inviting members of the Philadelphia region's many neighborhoods to document the buildings, public spaces, parks, landmarks and other sites that hold the memories of our communities and define where we live. Precious Places teaches the video production process to participating groups, fostering projects authored by those who intimately know the featured neighborhoods. The program began a decade ago, completed 2018 documentaries will launch on December 4, 2018.

Yolanda Wisner

www.yolandawisher.com

Philadelphia-based poet, singer, educator and curator Yolanda Wisner is the author of *Monk Eats an Afro* and the co-editor of *Peace is a Haiku Song*. She was named the inaugural Poet Laureate of Montgomery County, PA in 1999 and the third Poet Laureate of Philadelphia in 2016. A Pew and Cave Canem Fellow, she has been a Writer in Residence at Hedgebrook and Aspen Words. She performs with her band The Afroeaters. She is Curator of Spoken Word at Philadelphia Contemporary and has a studio at Cherry Street Pier on the Delaware River Waterfront.

Good Pitch Local Philadelphia Moderators

Lana Garland, Filmmaker and Curator, Hayti Heritage Center Film Festival

Twiggy Pucci Garçon, *Program Director*, True Colors Fund, Board Member, Doc Society

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