FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 14, 2025
Contact: John Boswell
john@ourpride.org

Rainbow Advocacy 2025 Awards Honor 31 Arts Projects, Artists and Advocates in 17 Countries

15th Anniversary Celebration Highlights 18 Short Films, 3 Music Projects, 3 Books, 2 Human Rights Projects, 4 Human Rights Advocates and 1 Pride Community Leader

LOS ANGELES, California - Marking its 15th anniversary and the official event partnership with WorldPride 2025, Rainbow Advocacy is presenting 31 awards to honorees in the USA, Canada, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Ghana, Tanzania, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, Taiwan, Indonesia, India, Australia, Iran and Turkey, highlighting many projects featured in the organization's 8th annual OUR PRIDE Shorts & Arts Festival, which included 170+ films from 25+ countries during the 40 day event concluding on the final day of Pride Month. The awards programs were first launched in 2011 with the first award presented to legendary entertainer Carol Channing in Palm Springs, California.

OUR PRIDE Shorts & Arts Fest Awards are presented in the categories of Short Film Series, Documentary, Narrative, Animation and Student film productions. Additional awards are in the categories of Music and Books, as well as *"Works In Progress"* including three short films and one book, many of which were featured in the WorldPride festival co-presented by the Charter for Compassion.

WorldPride Impact Awards honor WorldPride 2025 projects produced by Washington, DC-based nonprofit Crushing Colonialism for Indigenous arts & storytelling, and Sweden-based Rainbow Riots for a music video featuring drag queen entertainer Lady Bunny and seven Ugandan music and dance artists. An additional award honors Berlin-based Angel Maxine, Ghana's first out transgender musical artist.

The Troy Perry Legacy Awards include the **Medal of Pride** honoring Uganda's first transgender pastor Aggie Dennett Harmon and Ugandan writer / poet / human rights defender Hans Senfuma. The **Pride Community Impact Award** is presented to Jackette Knightley.

The inaugural **Mel White Soul Force Award** honors Hendrika Mayora Victoria Kelan, Indonesia's first openly transgender public office holder and village mayor.

Awards presentations include:

Kampala, UGANDA:
Presentations are planned by Kampala-based Kuchu Times Media Group to include Medal of Pride awards honoring Aggie Dennett Harmon and Hans Senfuma. Rainbow Riots Uganda Team members Ariana Mutoni, Kay, Rhianna, Noel, Shebu, Mahad, and Hush will each receive the **WorldPride Impact Award**.

San Diego, California, USA:
The Troy Perry Pride Community Impact Award is presented to Jackette Knightley. The award presentation is planned for the July 20 San Diego Pride festival in collaboration with San Diego Pride, recipient of the 2022 Troy Perry Pride Community Impact Award. Jackette will also be receiving San Diego Pride's Stonewall Award for Arts & Culture.

Habi, INDONESIA:
The **Mel White Soul Force Award** is an inaugural award presented to Hendrika Mayora Victoria Kelan, Indonesia's first openly transgender public office holder and village mayor.

About The Troy Perry Legacy Awards: Launched in 2016 in honor of Rev. Troy D. Perry, a founding father of the Pride movement, the Troy Perry Awards program is a program of Los Angeles-based Rainbow Advocacy. The awards reflect the three main focuses of Troy Perry's life: Human Rights, Pride Movement and Spiritual Activism. The awards recognize fearless LGBTQIA+ young people, community leaders, and Pride organizations making an impact through social and spiritual activism.
DETAILS: rainbowadvocacy.org/troyperry-awards

About Reverend Troy D. Perry
Reverend Troy D. Perry is an internationally renowned LGBTQ+ human rights activist and a pioneer in social equality, legal protection, and spiritual justice for LGBTQ+ people. In 1968, he founded the world's first LGBTQ+ church and denomination, Metropolitan Community Churches, performed the first public same-sex marriage in the USA, and conceived and led the world's first permitted Gay Pride Parade in 1970.
DETAILS: revtroyperry.com

About Mel White Soul Force Award
The Mel White Soul Force Award is created to honor individuals who are applying Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha (soul force) as inner spiritual power and transformation with courage and nonviolent resistance in challenging injustice and religious oppression.

The award is a tribute to the life's work of James Melville "Mel" White, author, film & television producer and founder of advocacy nonprofit Soulforce. Mel was awarded the American Civil Liberties Union's National Civil Liberties Award in1997 for his work applying "soul force" principles to the struggle for justice for sexual minorities based on Mahatma Gandhi's concept of soul force adopted by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha, meaning "holding onto truth," is rooted in the idea of soul force. He believed that by resisting evil through nonviolent means and accepting suffering without retaliation, individuals could tap into a deeper spiritual power that would ultimately prevail. Soul force is not merely a tactic of resistance but also a way of life, emphasizing inner transformation, spiritual growth, and the cultivation of love and compassion. It involves challenging injustice with a deep commitment to truth and a willingness to face adversity with courage and resilience. Mel led extensive campaigns throughout the USA to advocate for the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ people and to end religious and political oppression against LGBTQIA+ individuals through nonviolent resistance and by challenging harmful ideologies

About Rainbow Advocacy
Rainbow Advocacy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to civil rights, social action, and community development. **OUR PRIDE** is a global platform dedicated to advancing the LGBTQIA+ Pride movement through storytelling, community, and advocacy.
DETAILS: rainbowadvocacy.org

2025 RAINBOW ADVOCACY AWARDS

SHORT FILMS

DOCUMENTARY (SERIES): ***“Queer2Queer”*** (USA)
VIDEO POETRY (SERIES): ***"We Are Not Criminals"*** (TANZANIA)
VIDEO POETRY (SERIES): ***"UNSAID: Hairitage"*** (USA / NIGERIA)
DOCUMENTARY: ***“UNSUNG: Queer Portraits of Authenticity and the Cost of Its Absence”*** (USA/SPAIN)
DOCUMENTARY: *“**Darcelle: On Life, Love and Dying”*** (USA)
DOCUMENTARY: ***“There Are Things To Do”*** (USA)
DOCUMENTARY: ***“Who I Wasn't”*** (USA)
DOCUMENTARY: ***“Samlingi”*** (INDIA) (Language: Punjabi)
NARRATIVE: ***“Hi Mom, It's Me, Lou Lou”*** (TURKEY)
NARRATIVE: ***“Uno & Hatago”*** (NAMIBIA)
NARRATIVE: ***“Amida”*** (IRAN)
ANIMATION: ***“Echo”*** (TAIWAN)
NARRATIVE (STUDENT): ***“Translucent”*** (GERMANY)
NARRATIVE (STUDENT): ***“RED HAT”*** (USA)
DOCUMENTARY (STUDENT): ***“What is Social Justice?”*** (USA)
HORROR (STUDENT): ***“Freight”*** (USA)

MUSIC

"Forget to Remember: A Storytelling Music Concert" (NETHERLANDS)
Artists: Shishani + Sisterhood

"My Love (is the way it's supposed to be)" (SWEDEN + UGANDA)
ARTISTS: Petter Wallenberg + Lady Bunny + Rainbow Riots Uganda Team

"When It's Your Kid" (USA)
ARTIST: Johnny Schaefer

BOOKS

"Scents of Lavender: Queer Love Through the Ages - In Verse" (USA)
AUTHOR: D.C. Wilkinson

"IMMORTAL: The House of Ganymede" (USA)
AUTHOR: Robert A. Karl

"Gay Poems for Red States" (USA)
AUTHOR: Willie Edward Taylor Carver, Jr.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

DOCUMENTARY: ***"Portrait of Pride 2025"*** (USA)
DIRECTORS: Sam Gilberg + Harrison Nir

DOCUMENTARY: "***The Emerald's Touch"*** (INDONESIA + AUSTRALIA + CANADA)
DIRECTOR: Alfred Pek / PRODUCER: Melissa Green

DOCUMENTARY: ***"Hidden Lives"*** (INDIA)
DIRECTOR: Mohan Singh Aulakh

BOOK: ***"Echos of Grace"*** (UGANDA)
AUTHOR: Aggie Dennett Harmon

WORLDPRIDE IMPACT AWARDS

Crushing Colonialism (USA)
PRODUCER: Jen Deerinwater
WORLDPRIDE EVENT: **Decolonized Beatz**

Rainbow Riots (SWEDEN + UGANDA)
FOUNDER: Petter Wallenberg
WORLDPRIDE PRODUCTION: "***"My Love (is the way it's supposed to be)"***

Angel Maxine (GERMANY + GHANA)
PROJECT: Kill the Bill 2021-2025

TROY PERRY LEGACY AWARDS

HONOREE: ***Aggie Dennett Harmon*** (UGANDA
Medal of Pride

HONOREE: ***Hans Senfuma*** (UGANDA)
Medal of Pride

HONOREE: ***Jackette Knightley*** (USA)
Pride Community Impact Award

MEL WHITE SOUL FORCE AWARD

HONOREE: ***Hendrika Mayora Kelan***
Indonesia's First Openly Transgender Politician and Village Mayor

2025 RAINBOW ADVOCACY AWARDS

SHORT FILM SERIES

DOCUMENTARY: ***"Queer2Queer"*** (USA)
PRODUCERS: The Future Perfect Productions + CURED Documentary Team
A 4-part short film series featuring powerful intergenerational conversations between LGBTQIA+ youth and elder activists. In each of these four episodes, two inspiring change-makers come together to share wisdom, personal stories and hopes for the future. These heartfelt and uplifting conversations build connections between generations while fostering a deeper sense of our community's shared values.
DETAILS: ourpride.org/post/queer2queer-filmmaker-q-a

VIDEO POETRY: ***"We Are Not Criminals"*** (TANZANIA)
WRITER / DIRECTORS: Omary Baajun + Brother Zaheed
A trilogy of poetry short films that boldly call for dignity, visibility and equal rights for those pushed to the margins. It is a creation of "Unmute," a spoken word project which challenges prejudice and celebrates the power of poetry to reclaim identity and belonging with a call for dignity, visibility and human rights.
DETAILS: ourpride.substack.com/p/tanzania-trilogy-wins-2025-our-pride

VIDEO POETRY: ***"UNSAID: Hairitage"*** (USA / NIGERIA)
DIRECTOR: Ayodeji Otuyelu
A series of visual adaptations of poems from the book "Words In My Head" by director Ayodeji Otuyelo which explore emotions surrounding gender, sexual orientation, blackness and feminism through the eye of a gay director from the homophobic African country Nigeria. "Hairitage" celebrates black beauty.
DETAILS: ourpride.org/post/ayodej

DOCUMENTARY

DOCUMENTARY: *"UNSUNG: Queer Portraits of Authenticity and the Cost of Its Absence"* (USA/SPAIN)
DIRECTORS: Kimbery Warner + Troy Ford
Film producer Kimberly Warner and QStack founder Troy Ford present *Unsung*—a short, independent film amplifying the voices of four LGBTQ+ individuals whose lives reflect the intersection of identity, creativity, and personal truth. A meditative short film amplifying the voices of four LGBTQ+ individuals as they reflect on what it means to live truthfully in the face of silence, shame, and inherited erasure.

Set within the quiet intimacy of a shared domestic space, Unsung unfolds through layered conversations, gestures, and quiet candor — an intergenerational chorus of memory and becoming. As its subjects navigate queerness, identity, ancestry, and healing, the film offers a tender portrait of authenticity in process. It invites viewers to consider how the truths we suppress shape us — and how the ones we express might set us free. By centering quiet, intentional presence over narrative climax, Unsung becomes a slow, luminous act of resistance: an ode to chosen family, radical honesty, and the stories we carry forward when we're finally seen.
DETAILS: unfixedmedia.com/unfixed-unsung

DOCUMENTARY (Biography): *"Darcelle: On Life, Love and Dying"* (USA)
DIRECTOR: Sarah Shively
Darcelle, at the age of 91, was the Guinness World Record holder for the oldest working drag queen. On stage Darcelle was beloved as a prominent figure in the Portland, Oregon LGBTQ+ scene, but at home Walter Cole was just like anyone else who loves, laughs, and cries. In this short film, friends and family reflect with Darcelle on a long and accomplished life as the end of his draws near.
DETAILS: ourpride.org/post/sarah-shively

DOCUMENTARY (Biography): *"There Are Things To Do"* (USA)
DIRECTOR: Mike Syers
Urvashi Vaid, an outspoken immigrant, lesbian and woman of color was an LGBTQ+ leader and helped shape the modern day gay rights movement. Her vision for the movement serves as a roadmap of initiatives and tools for generations of activists as they currently face anti-LGBTQ+ backlash. The film features Urvashi's life in

Provincetown, MA and 34-year relationship with partner Kate Clinton, and inspires us that the best place to build community and work towards equality starts at home.
DETAILS: ourpride.org/post/mike-syers

DOCUMENTARY (Biography): *"Who I Wasn't"* (USA)
DIRECTOR: Seeley Bjorksten
"Who I Wasn't" is by far my most personal piece. The film is an open letter to my parents who died without ever knowing that I'm transgender. My parents got a VHS camera in 1996 and used it ardently for the next nine years, documenting quotidian moments of the family, right up until their death. For me, videos of my childhood are prickled with tragedy, something I expect many transgender people can find relatable."
DETAILS: ourpride.org/post/seeley-bjorksten

DOCUMENTARY: *"Samlingi"* (INDIA) (Language: Punjabi)
DIRECTOR: Mohan Singh Aulakh
This film challenges discrimination and uplifts queer voices from regional India LGBTQIA+ people of Punjab, who are not seen with respect in Punjab. They are ridiculed and outcast and struggle for survival. The documentary illustrates the challenges faced by the entire LGBTQ+ community.
DETAILS: Instagram

NARRATIVE

NARRATIVE: *"Hi Mom, It's Me, Lou Lou"* (TURKEY)
DIRECTOR: Atakan Yilmak
Hakkı, a university student earning his keep through drag performances in Istanbul, is jolted by the news of his mother's passing one night. Concealing his sexual orientation from all but his late mother, he returns to the family home after three years, confronting the weighty expectations of being the only male offspring and his relatives' ignorance. In his childhood room, poignant discoveries await: a vibrant sweater begun by his mother, a stash of cash, and a clandestine photograph capturing a shared moment during her covert visit. Despite grappling with guilt over his mother's demise and his father's aloofness, this journey catalyzes his journey towards self-acceptance.

NARRATIVE: ***"Uno & Hatago"*** (NAMIBIA)
DIRECTOR: Hillary Shiimi (with Women's Leadership Centre)
A young lesbian couple, Uno and Hatago, navigate societal barriers, prejudice, and violence in their pursuit of love and acceptance. The film, produced by the Women's Leadership Centre, aims to highlight the struggles and triumphs of LGBTQI+ individuals in Namibia and promote visibility for the lesbian community.
DETAILS: ourpride.org/post/hillary-uno-shiimi

NARRATIVE: ***"Amida"*** (IRAN)
DIRECTOR: Majid Mirhashemi
Qasem, a young man on the verge of gender transition, is invited by his brothers to a celebration where he receives a new name and becomes Parvaneh. But the arrival of Khandadash (eldest brother) disrupts the calm, revealing the true intentions of the brothers. Amidst the chaos, Qasem is caught in a purgatory between her inner truth and outer appearance, while Khan Dadash is trapped in his own purgatory, unable to accept this new reality. In the end, only two remain, connected by a silence in the damned purgatory. *"In the film, I tried to portray, with a non-stereotypical narrative, the purgatory that trans people are trapped in until they reach their true identity, and the purgatory that their families are stuck in between acceptance and rejection. The person I rented the filming location from came on set and I found out that his son was a trans person…and it was a coincidence."*

ANIMATION

ANIMATION: ***"Echo"*** (TAIWAN)
DIRECTOR: Chih Hao Shen
She never spoke, but she always knew she was different. This film was born from the quiet, often unseen reality of queer existence, where identity is felt before it is named, and belonging is sought before it is found. Growing up queer, or simply "other, often means learning to navigate a world full of labels that never quite fit. In one scene, these labels appear as notes drifting in a library: an image of how society tries to classify what it cannot understand. But Echo is not about answers. It is about the spaces between.

STUDENT FILMS

NARRATIVE: *"Translucent"* (GERMANY)
DIRECTOR: Kat Schmitz (ifs - internationale Filmschule Köln / Cologne)
Translucent shares the perspective of gender-diverse athletes inspired by the real life example of tennis player Renée Richards. Produced within 48 hours, this film looks back on Renée's vibrant career in competitive sport and her search for belonging through the eyes of her older self. It raises the most pressing question in the sports world right now on the tennis court: Where do trans athletes belong in the sports principles of fairness? *"As a non-binary person growing up in competitive sports myself, I often felt as though there was no place where I really belonged. Renée Richards is an inspiring example on how one could live their truth if the world would be ready for this life's complexity."*

NARRATIVE: *"RED HAT"* (USA)
DIRECTOR: Nik Vyshinskiy (Emerson College / Boston, Massachusetts)
A young man finds an ideological escape from fear, loneliness, and uncertainty, to learn the truth behind what that ideology entails. *"Creating this project to me meant confronting issues I've seen happen around me in increased volume and intensity as of very recently. A lot of the things I criticize and satirize in this film come from personal experiences of mine and my close ones, and the need to speak up about them, which would never leave me unless I made this film."*

DOCUMENTARY: *"What is Social Justice?"* (USA)
DIRECTOR: Allen Myers (Portland State University / Portland, Oregon)
A collaborative short film created by students in the Social Justice and the Arts program at Portland State University. The film weaves together community reflections, student artwork, and a collective poetic response to explore the layered meaning of social justice. From interviews with Portland community members to intimate glimpses of student art-making, the film moves from inquiry to expression. It asks not just for definitions, but for embodiment — for the viewer to engage, reflect, and respond. This film is one response. *The next page is yours. What will you create?*

HORROR: ***"Freight"*** (USA)
DIRECTOR: Parker Parent (Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas)
An original horror short film showcasing a character being haunted by an unknown source they later realize is gender dysphoria. Rylie has long been ignoring a looming Figure that plagues her, until she finds kinship in Sam, who seems to be going through the same struggles. *"This film is very meaningful to me, it pulls a lot from my personal experiences being trans. Specifically reflecting on the period of time where you know you're trans but haven't quite accepted it yet, which for me was years long."*

MUSIC

"Forget to Remember: A Storytelling Music Concert" (NETHERLANDS)
ARTISTS: Shishani + Sisterhood
A contemporary anthem for freedom composed by Namibian-born, Netherlands-based artist Shishani, "Forget to Remember" forms the foundation of a 2025 tour through the Netherlands and Indonesia. Shishani and the Sisterhood collective highlight stories of important historical figures in relation to colonial landmarks and history.

In 2021, Shishani founded Sisterhood, a collective of female and non-binary artists who highlight a shared heritage between Namibia, Indonesian islands and the Moluccan islands through the Dutch colonial past. This unique crew performs a mesmerizing show centering female & queer perspectives on marginalized voices through music, dance and storytelling. Shishani & Sisterhood dives into the various stories and art forms of Namibia, Indonesia and Suriname and create an artistic storytelling concert. The collective worked with 12 performers who have joined in various combinations for live performances. Their focus is creating a space where unheard stories, memories and the legacy of the colonial past are transformed into new shared narratives by connecting African, Asian and European descendants and working towards a collective healing.
DETAILS: shishani.nl

"My Love (is the way it's supposed to be)" (SWEDEN + UGANDA)
ARTISTS: Petter Wallenberg + Lady Bunny + Rainbow Riots Uganda Team
A WorldPride 2025 anthem celebrating love as an act of resistance. The track features legendary New York drag queen Lady Bunny and queer singers and drag performers from Uganda, where being LGBTQ+ is illegal. Released in time to mark WorldPride 2025, the single brings together queer voices from three continents in an electrifying, emotional and deeply personal stand against the rising tide of global LGBTQ+ persecution. Launched by Sweden-based nonprofit Rainbow Riots, the song is released in 3 unique versions: disco, afrobeat and ballad version.

In 2022, Rainbow Riots released “We Don’t Care,” the first ever song with a WorldPride theme and a global protest against hatred towards LGBT people, also composed and produced by Swedish gay artist, and LGBTQ+ activist Petter Wallenberg in collaboration with queer singers from around the world, including countries where same sex relations are illegal.
DETAILS: rainbowriots.com

"When It's Your Kid" (USA)
ARTIST: Johnny Schaefer
"When It’s Your Kid” tackles LGBTQ+ oppression and gun violence, urging empathy for youth and parents affected by these issues. Eclectic singer-songwriter Johnny Schaefer is known for tackling difficult subject matter in his music. His latest song, “When It’s Your Kid,” offers an honest look at the problems facing our world and nation, encouraging listeners to consider other perspectives during these polarizing times. Schaefer believes music can be a gateway to understanding and empathy.

“When It’s Your Kid” addresses a range of issues affecting today’s youth, from LGBTQ+ oppression to gun violence. The song tells the true story of a closeted young man whose family’s silence led to his tragic suicide. Schaefer asks listeners to consider how they would feel if it were their own child. The second verse highlights the trauma of school shootings, urging listeners to empathize with parents praying their child isn’t among the victims. The music video highlights the work of The Trevor Project, March for Our Lives and Sandy Hook Promise.
DETAILS: ourpride.org/post/johnny-schaefer

BOOKS

"Scents of Lavender: Queer Love Through the Ages - In Verse" (USA)
AUTHOR: D.C. Wilkinson
Timeless and unwavering, love flows through a universal melody that echoes in every corner of the globe. Transcending borders and cultures, it sows the seeds of memories that sprout and blossom in Scents of Lavender, a collection of 25 illustrated poems that breathe life into evocative scenes where queer love proudly re-emerges from the depths of history, uncovering deep and everlasting bonds.

Each poem invites the reader to explore the narrator's deeply personal and intimate perspective through pantheistic eyes. Written in the first person, every verse unfolds as both a reflection and a manifestation of a single universal mind and soul, drawing the reader into a shared understanding that love -in all its forms- is boundless, eternal, and permeates the cosmos.

This collection is intended to be a celebration of love's universality, and a reminder that queer love is not a modern construct, but a force that has shaped human lives since the beginning of civilization. D. C. Wilkinson's literary work centers on historical tales, portal fantasies, and dreams and visions weaved into narratives that highlight LGBTQ+ love through the ages.
DETAILS: Substack

"IMMORTAL: The House of Ganymede" (USA)
AUTHOR: Robert A. Karl
This contemporary story is inspired by ancient Greek mythology, whereby Ganymede, the most beautiful mortal, is pursued and kidnapped by Zeus to serve as the cup-bearer to the gods of Mount Olympus. Jason, a beautiful gay teen, is being pursued by different people, for different purposes. But Jason is also in pursuit of it all — fame, fortune, and romance.

As he begins to explore his Queer identity, what sacrifices must he make in order to be chosen as the face of IMMORTAL, a new line of self-care products for men? Is it

possible to have it all? The story is timeless, but re-imagined in a contemporary setting, reflecting on themes such as peer pressure, cultural conflicts, the allure of social media, and the complexities of coming out in today's atmosphere. Though written for young adults, readers of all ages will enjoy this thought-provoking and engaging story.
DETAIL: Interview with Wyatt Evans

"Gay Poems for Red States" (USA)
AUTHOR: Willie Edward Taylor Carver, Jr.
In Gay Poems for Red States, Willie Edward Taylor Carver, Jr. counters the injustice of a persistent anti-LGBTQ+ movement by asserting that a life full of beauty and pride is possible for everyone. More than a collection of poetry, Carver's earnest and heartfelt verses are for those wishing to discover and understand the vastness of Appalachia, and for the LGBTQ+ Appalachians who long for a future—for a home—in an often unwelcoming place.

Months after being named the 2022 Kentucky Teacher of the Year, Willie Edward Taylor Carver Jr. announced his decision to leave the public school system. His career as a high school English teacher had spanned more than a decade but ended abruptly—another casualty of the cruel and dangerous anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination that is creeping back into the halls of government and the homes of Americans.

At the beginning of Carver's career, an administrator warned him about discussing his otherwise openly gay identity at work: "No one will protect you, including me." A new administration allowed for more freedom, but the initial warning eventually rang true. School officials failed repeatedly to address harassment of students and of Carver himself, until he could no longer endure such a purposeful deterioration of human rights. While Carver's testimony before the House of Representatives brought much-needed attention to the need for protections for LGBTQ+ people in schools, the damage was done.
DETAILS: Interview with Charter for Compassion

WORKS IN PROGRESS

DOCUMENTARY: *"Portrait of Pride 2025"* (USA)
DIRECTORS: Sam Gilberg + Harrison Nir
"*A Crowdsourced Film by the People, for the Movement" produced by* Brooklyn-based documentary filmmakers leveraging a new online platform dedicated to amplifying community stories through crowdsourced media, gathering media from diverse voices to be transformed into powerful storytelling for films and impact campaigns.

Having collaborated with HBO Documentaries, Oscar-nominated Sandbox Films, and international festivals like NYCxDesign, the production team is partnering with organizations like GLSEN and USA Prides on a national open call to collect videos, photos, and written stories from LGBTQ+ individuals and allies across the US. From the heat of a parade to the quiet of a bedroom, the film will capture a portrait of the PRIDE movement's strength in the face of ongoing adversity in a national portrait of Pride.
DETAILS: crowdsorcery.io/pride

DOCUMENTARY: "*The Emerald's Touch"* (INDONESIA + AUSTRALIA + CANADA)
DIRECTOR: Alfred Pek / PRODUCER: Melissa Green
Unity in Diversity Unveiled! "The Emerald's Touch" is a compelling story that follows the leadership quest of Indonesia's first and rising star Trans politician and a Queer Activist Hendrika Mayora Kelan in uniting broken voices, uncovering forgotten queer histories, and fighting against patriarchy. She's navigating through a time when LGBTQ Indonesians, in particular, Lesbians, Trans, and Queer Women, bear the brunt of the worst discrimination, violence, marginalisation, and queer historical erasure in a declining democracy of contemporary Indonesia.

To challenge the cultural amnesia, homophobia, and deep-rooted patriarchy in the world's largest forgotten yet hyper-diverse nation, Hendrika partners up with Saskia Wieringa, a Dutch Lesbian sociologist who proactively decolonises queer women's voices and history across the nation. From the unsung Lesbian Warriors of Borneo, Gender Bending Performers of Java, and Sacred Spiritualists of Sulawesi, Hendrika vows to unite and re-ignite the nation's true identity, hope, joy, and empowerment for Queer women activists and changemakers in one of the most invisible and broken communities across the Nusantara Archipelago.
DETAILS: Film Website / Instagram

DOCUMENTARY: *"Hidden Lives"* (INDIA)
DIRECTOR: Mohan Singh Aulakh
The documentary "Hidden Lives" is focusing on the lives of rural LGBTQIA+ individuals in Northern India. Filmmaker Mohan Singh Aulakh aims to raise awareness and promote understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community in rural India. The film's goal is to bring attention to the Queer community's struggles and challenges, encouraging open discussions and societal change.

In rural North India, a marginalized community of queer individuals struggles to find acceptance, love and basic human rights. This documentary delves into the lives of these individuals, exploring their experiences, challenges and triumphs. Through intimate interviews, observational footage and personal stories, the film humanizes the queer community, challenging societal norms and stereotypes. By sharing their stories, award-winning director and acti Mohan Singh Aulakh aims to create empathy, understanding and acceptance.
DETAILS: Instagram

BOOK: *"Echos of Grace"* (UGANDA)
AUTHOR: Aggie Dennett Harmon
"Echoes of Grace" is more than a book. It's a movement of faith, resilience, and liberation. Created by pastor Aggie Dennett Harmon, Uganda's first openly trans woman pastor, this groundbreaking project amplifies the sacred stories of rural trans and queer women surviving and thriving at the margins.

Rooted in womanist theology and spiritual storytelling, Echoes of Grace brings together testimonies of rejection, spiritual survival, motherhood, migration, and the deep healing power of visibility. Rooted in womanist theology and spiritual storytelling, Echoes of Grace brings together testimonies of rejection, spiritual survival, motherhood, migration, and the deep healing power of visibility. These are voices the world has tried to silence yet they endure, and now, they will be heard.
DETAILS: givebutter.com/echos

WorldPride Impact Awards honor WorldPride 2025 projects and Berlin-based Angel Maxine, Ghana's first openly transgender musician.

Crushing Colonialism (USA)
PRODUCER: Jen Deerinwater
PERFORMANCE ART
WORLDPRIDE EVENT: **Decolonized Beatz** is an Indigenous arts and performance series to celebrate the work of Indigenous storytellers, organizers, and performers, including disabled and chronically ill and 2SLGBTQIA+ creatives, women, and Afro-Indigenous artists.

Crushing Colonialism is an Indigenous-led 501(c3) nonprofit in the so-called United States that uplifts Indigenous people through arts, media, and traditional storytelling while supporting those doing the work. Founded in 2016 by Jen Deerinwater and operated by Indigenous people working in a variety of storytelling fields across the world, they work to increase the pay and employment of Indigenous storytellers while also promoting their work, providing funding for media and arts projects, and increasing access to professional representation.

Crushing Colonialism's mission is to uplift and tell the stories of Indigenous people through media and traditional storytelling. They produce international reporting and organizing to inform and empower marginalized community members, create professional opportunities, and advocate for the just funding and employment of Native artists, media workers and storytellers. In doing this they control the narratives in order to crush colonialism.
DETAILS: crushingcolonialism.org

Rainbow Riots (SWEDEN + UGANDA)
FOUNDER: Petter Wallenberg
WORLDPRIDE PRODUCTION: ***"My Love (is the way it's supposed to be)"***
ARTISTS: Petter Wallenberg + Lady Bunny + Rainbow Riots Uganda Team
A WorldPride 2025 anthem celebrating love as an act of resistance. The track features legendary New York drag queen Lady Bunny and queer singers and drag performers from Uganda, where being LGBTQ+ is illegal. Released for WorldPride 2025, the single brings together queer voices from three continents in an electrifying, emotional and deeply personal stand against the rising tide of global LGBTQ+ persecution. Launched by Sweden-based nonprofit Rainbow Riots, the song is released in 3 unique versions: disco, afrobeat and ballad version.

Sweden-based Rainbow Riots is a non-profit organisation that creates arts and cultural projects to advocate for human rights for LGBTQ people around the world. It was founded in 2012 by Petter Wallenberg, a Swedish artist, musician, director and human rights activist, who creates artistic collaborations with fellow LGBTQ people all over the world to advocate for equality. In 2017, the organisation released an album of original music, 'Rainbow Riots,' composed and produced by Wallenberg, featuring queer voices from the world's most dangerous countries for LGBTQ people. The album was championed by the BBC, who called it "the ultimate protest," and by Dazed Digital, who called it "the zenith of international queer activism."
DETAILS: rainbowriots.com

Angel Maxine (GERMANY + GHANA)
Angel Maxine Opoku is a Ghanaian musician and known as the first openly transgender Ghanaian musician. In support of WorldPride and addressing CSD (Christopher Street Day) Zurich Pride in Switzerland, Angel addresses the anti-LGBTI+ bill in Ghana and calls for international solidarity. View Here

Angel started her music career in 2020 with her first single titled "Sweetness." She later went on to release "Wo Fie" which featured Wanlov the Kubolor and Sister Deborah and then "Kill The Bill" in 2021.

Her song Kill The Bill is a campaign song against the Ghanaian anti-LGBT bill. Her 2022 single titled "Prep" is a song about a medication which prevents you from contracting HIV. Angel Maxine is an open advocate for LGBTQ+ rights in Ghana and has been vocal about her rejection of the proposed Ghanaian anti-LGBT bill which is before the Parliament of Ghana as of July 2022.
DETAILS: facebook.com/angelmaxinetv

TROY PERRY LEGACY AWARDS

HONOREE: ***Aggie Dennett Harmon*** (UGANDA
Troy Perry Medal of Pride
Pastor Aggie Dennett Harmon is Uganda's first openly transgender woman pastor and a leading voice for queer liberation in East Africa. The Medal of Pride is a recognition of her fearless activism, profound spiritual leadership, and unwavering commitment to uplifting marginalized LGBTQIA+ communities in the face of immense adversity.

Pastor Aggie Dennett Harmon's journey is a powerful testament to extraordinary resilience, shaped by early experiences of violence and displacement. She is the co-founder and pastor of Talented Youth Community Fellowship Uganda (TAYCOF), a faith-rooted, trans women-led organization dedicated to empowering rural trans and queer communities through storytelling, education, spiritual care, and advocacy.

As a spiritual leader in the Young Prophets Collective, Aggie's ministry boldly reclaims the sacred by challenging religious misinterpretations that condemn LGBTQ+ people, particularly the weaponization of scriptures like the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. She teaches that God makes no mistakes and that queer and trans people are beloved, holy, and worthy of spiritual leadership.

Aggie is the author of the forthcoming groundbreaking anthology, *Echoes of Grace: The Sacred Lives of Rural Trans and Queer Women*, which emerges from her storytelling and advocacy project, *Rural Radiance*. The book weaves together raw narratives of pain, power, and healing from women who have faced harassment, sexual violence,

forced migration, and erasure. Through womanist theology and narrative justice, Aggie centers the sacred lives of those most forgotten in both church and society: rural, Black, trans, and queer women, reclaiming their place in sacred history.

Beyond her pastoral and literary work, Aggie is a committed HIV advocate, raising awareness about the rising rates of infection among LGBTQ+ Ugandans, exacerbated by healthcare access barriers, funding cuts, and increased criminalization under the Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2023. She continues to fight for her community, bringing messages of support, faith, and community directly to their doorsteps.
DETAILS: givebutter.com/echos

HONOREE: ***Hans Senfuma*** (UGANDA)
Troy Perry Medal of Pride
Hans Senfuma is a native gay Ugandan and courageous LGBTQIA+ Rights Campaigner, Human Rights defender, writer, and activist. Hans, age 22, is engaged in crucial online activism in an environment where the situation for LGBTQ+ individuals is not only dangerous but potentially deadly. He notes that many colleagues have been imprisoned because of their sexuality. He had to stay inside for a time, not going out, because he feared for his life.

In the face of such severe threats and adversity, Hans stands as a beacon of hope, courage, and resilience in Uganda. He advises others facing similar challenges to "stay with hope," calling it the only thing that will fuel them into a brighter future. He passionately encourages global engagement in educating and advocating for acceptance, particularly in countries where same-sex relationships are targeted or hated.

While Uganda is known as the "pearl of Africa," it is also one of the countries in Africa with the harshest anti-gay laws. The current anti-homosexuality law includes penalties such as the death penalty and life imprisonment, though the death penalty has not yet been enforced. Actions like Hans' activism, regarded as the "promotion of homosexuality," could result in a sentence of up to 20 years of imprisonment.

Despite growing up in challenging circumstances, having lost his mother at birth and being raised in conservative Christian families who called his identity evil, Hans has dedicated himself to fighting for LGBTQ+ rights in Uganda. He faced significant

persecution, including being treated like a "demon," dehumanised, isolated from children, and deemed a threat to family members who feared he would "recruit children into homosexuality." He was even chased out of his home at midnight after being beaten up, subsequently finding shelter with a queer friend.

Through his activism, Hans also highlights the distressing rate of suicide attempts within the LGBTQ+ community globally, attributing it to various forms of hatred and bullying. His message includes a powerful call to *"stand with the flag and stand with the folks."*
DETAILS: givebutter.com/hanslife

HONOREE: ***Jackette Knightley*** (USA)
Pride Community Impact Award
Jackette's life's work has been running private practices and hospital settings for the LGBTQ+ communities for over 25+ years. And the last 5 years there's been an extension of her giving with the gift of celebrated worldwide music and raising up 5000+ Queens & Kings for Causes (young entertainers of all ages) to increase awareness and funds for social justice issues, with a heart to help others in a meaningful and enduring way.

As seen on ABC, NBC, CBS and news outlets around the globe, Jackette Knightley is a multi-award winning entertainer, philanthropist and renowned LGBTQ recording artist. Her international body of work spans 3 LGBTQ+ dance albums and 70 hit singles which have placed her on top of the LGBTQ+ Music Charts across Europe, Canada, S. Africa and Australia, winning Best LGBTQ+ Music Artist by Out Loud Music and Q Radio in Canada and Commonwealth countries. She's best known for using her music to help raise visibility, awareness and funds for SoCal LGBTQ Centers, Prides, Trans Health Care, DAP Health, APLA Health, BLM, Defense Against Deportation, and a host of Southern California LGBTQ+ charitable causes.

Her work has garnered mayoral and congressional honors, and endorsements from Emmy, Grammy & Oscar Winning Celebrities. She's a 3X Honoree of The Hollywood Museum for LGBTQ+ Icons and Legends, and 5X International Music Award Winner for her positive global impact in promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of our worldwide LGBTQ+ communities.
DETAILS: Instagram

MEL WHITE SOUL FORCE AWARD

HONOREE: ***Hendrika Mayora Kelan***
Indonesia's First Openly Transgender Politician and Village Mayor

Hendrika Mayora Victoria Kelan is Indonesia's very first openly transgender politician, who had entered Catholic seminary to become a priest then later embraced her gender identity and sought public office to become the nation's first trangender public office holder as village mayor.

Since childhood, Hendrika endured decades of struggle and scorn for her femininity and agonized over her decision to leave the Catholic clergy after coming to terms with her gender identity, later facing accusations of demonic possession and daily threats of violence after she succumbed to sex work to earn a living.

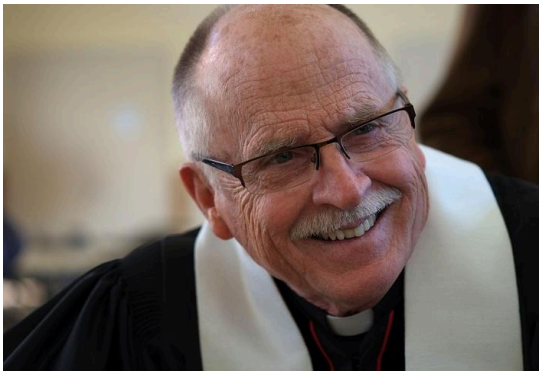
Living in a monastery in Yogyakarta, a city known as the cradle of Javanese culture, Hendrika had increasingly struggled to reconcile her personal struggle with church teachings, developed vertigo from the stress and eventually quit the clergy in 2015 after initially being denied by the local archbishop.

Hendrika started working at a nonprofit agency helping people with HIV and met a trans activist who urged her to shave her beard and embrace her identity by wearing women's clothes and make-up.

The transition was liberating, but it left her nearly destitute and unable to find steady work which led to working alongside transgender sex workers on the streets. She sometimes used her martial arts skills to break up fights and protect fellow prostitutes and still has a pin in her arm from an injury sustained fleeing police. After connecting with LGBTQ+ activists she began advocating for transgender rights at seminars and college campuses.

Elected as the head of Village Consultative Body (Chief Village Council), Hendrika is Indonesia's First Transwoman Public Official, born in Maumere, East Nusa Tenggara. She grew up in West Papua and pursued Catholic seminary in Yogyakarta, Java. She is a leading public official figure in the region. She was an avid volunteer in many community organisations, predominantly in LGBTIQ spaces, before founding her community organisations in Flores that support trans health and rights. In 2020, she was elected to be a public official in response to the demand of her community in Habi Village and successfully embraced the political role in contemporary Indonesia.

Hendrika has used her platform to encourage other transgender Indonesians to do volunteer work to raise acceptance and has led trans women in a flag ceremony for Indonesia's Independence Day calling for equal rights.



ABOUT THE MEL WHITE SOUL FORCE AWARD

The **Mel White Soul Force Awards** is created to honor individuals who are applying Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha (soul force) as inner spiritual power and transformation with courage and nonviolent resistance in challenging injustice and religious oppression.

The award is a tribute to the life's work of James Melville "Mel" White, author, film & television producer and founder of advocacy nonprofit Soulforce. Mel was awarded the American Civil Liberties Union's National Civil Liberties Award in1997 for his work applying "soul force" principles to the struggle for justice for sexual minorities based on Mahatma Gandhi's concept of soul force adopted by Martin Luther King, Jr.

Gandhi's philosophy of Satyagraha, meaning "holding onto truth," is rooted in the idea of soul force. He believed that by resisting evil through nonviolent means and accepting suffering without retaliation, individuals could tap into a deeper spiritual power that would ultimately prevail. Soul force is not merely a tactic of resistance but also a way of life, emphasizing inner transformation, spiritual growth, and the cultivation of love and compassion. It involves challenging injustice with a deep commitment to truth and a willingness to face adversity with courage and resilience. Mel led extensive campaigns throughout the USA to advocate for the rights and dignity of LGBTQIA+ people and to end religious and political oppression against LGBTQIA+ individuals through nonviolent resistance and by challenging harmful ideologies.