

\*\*\* EMBARGOED UNTIL FRI, MAY 31 AT 11:00 AM ET \*\*\*

## TRIBECA FESTIVAL AND OPEN AI ANNOUNCE 'SORA SHORTS'

*Five Commissioned Short Films Created Using Sora Debut at 2024 Tribeca Festival*



**NEW YORK, NY – May 31, 2024** – Today, the 2024 Tribeca Festival and OpenAI announced a program to debut five original short films, marking the first time films made using OpenAI's text-to-video AI model Sora will be showcased at a festival.

By giving filmmakers access to Sora's capabilities, this initiative explores the developing space of generative AI as a creative tool. The group of award-winning filmmakers are Tribeca Festival alumni and, in the spirit of exploration, were only given a few weeks to complete their projects.

"Tribeca is rooted in the foundational belief that storytelling inspires change. Humans need stories to thrive and make sense of our wonderful and broken world," **said co-founder and CEO of Tribeca Enterprises Jane Rosenthal**. "Sometimes these stories come to us as a feature film, an immersive experience, a piece of art, or even an AI-generated short film. I can't wait to see what this group of fiercely creative Tribeca alumni come up with."

As part of the initiative, the cohort of filmmakers were educated about OpenAI's tools, given early access to Sora, and empowered to create a film on their own terms. Filmmakers were also required to adhere to the terms of the agreements negotiated with the DGA, WGA and SAG in 2023 with respect to the use of AI regardless of whether the films fell under the purview of such guilds. Participating filmmakers include: Bonnie Discepolo, Ellie Foubmi, Nikyatu Jusu, Reza Sixo Safai and Michaela Ternasky-Holland.

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“It’s great to see how these filmmakers are extending their creativity with Sora, and we are honored for their works to debut at the Tribeca Festival,” said **COO of OpenAI Brad Lightcap**. “We’re excited for their short films, and eager to learn how we can make Sora a better tool for all creatives.”

The five films will debut on June 15 at the Tribeca Film Center Screening Room. Following the screening, Tribeca and OpenAI will host a conversation with the filmmakers about the importance of artists pushing boundaries, challenging ideas, and bringing stories to life in innovative ways.

Filmmaker bios can be found below.

For more updates on programming follow @Tribeca and #Tribeca2024 on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#). Tribeca Membership or 2024 Tribeca Festival passes and ticket packages can be purchased at [tribecafilm.com](https://tribecafilm.com).

### **About Tribeca Festival**

The Tribeca Festival, presented by OKX, brings artists and diverse audiences together to celebrate storytelling in all its forms, including film, TV, music, audio storytelling, games, and immersive. With strong roots in independent film, Tribeca is synonymous with creative expression and entertainment. Tribeca champions emerging and established voices, discovers award-winning talent, curates innovative experiences, and introduces new ideas through exclusive premieres, exhibitions, conversations, and live performances.

The Festival was founded by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff in 2001 to spur the economic and cultural revitalization of lower Manhattan following the attacks on the World Trade Center. The annual Tribeca Festival will celebrate its 23rd year from June 5–16, 2024 in New York City.

In 2019, James Murdoch’s Lupa Systems bought a majority stake in Tribeca Enterprises, bringing together Rosenthal, De Niro, and Murdoch to grow the enterprise.

### **About 2024 Tribeca Festival Partners**

The 2024 Tribeca Festival is presented by OKX and with the support of our partners: AT&T, Audible, Bulleit Frontier Whiskey, Canva, CHANEL, City National Bank, Don Julio Tequila, Easterseals Disability Services, e.l.f. Beauty, Gilead, Indeed, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Mazda, NBC4 and Telemundo 47, NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, National CineMedia, New York Magazine, Spring Studios New York, Starbucks, The Wall Street Journal, TikTok, Variety, Vulture, Whalar, and WeTransfer.

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## **Filmmaker Bios**

### **Bonnie Discepolo**

Bonnie Discepolo is a filmmaker and actor who writes and directs genre films about women's bodily autonomy. Discepolo's films feature grounded characters in heightened or magical worlds. Discepolo's films have played Tribeca, SXSW, Fantastic Fest, Overlook Film Festival and many more. Discepolo is an alum of Robert Rodriguez's "Rebel Without a Crew the Series." In addition to writing and directing, Discepolo is an actor who can be seen on Fire Country, Chicago Med, Shazam: Fury of the Gods, and Robert Rodriguez's Hypnotic. Discepolo is currently interested in stories about time travel, metaphysics and climate change.

### **Ellie Foubi**

Ellie Foubi is an award-winning Cameroonian American filmmaker whose debut feature, *Our Father, the Devil*, screened at over 50 international film festivals and went on to win several prizes. It received universal critical acclaim, including Independent Spirit Award and Gotham Award Nominations. She's an alumna of Berlinale Talents and a BAFTA Breakthrough USA Fellow. In 2022, Ellie was named one of 25 New Faces of Independent Film by Filmmaker Magazine. She holds an MFA in Directing from Columbia University's School of the Arts.

### **Nikyatu Jusu**

Nikyatu Jusu is an independent writer, director, and tenured Professor in Film & Video at George Mason University. Her short films have screened at festivals nationally and internationally, marking her Sundance short film debut and foray into representation (CAA & M88) with her Black vampire film *Suicide By Sunlight* [2019]. *Nanny* [2022], Jusu's feature film debut, made her the second black woman director and *Nanny* the first horror film to win the Sundance Grand Jury Prize (US Dramatic). A meteoric year for *Nanny* includes wins such as: Sundance Film Festival's Vanguard Award, Las Vegas Film Critics Society Breakout Filmmaker of the year and a myriad of additional awards culminating in the 2023 Film Independent Spirit Someone to Watch Award. *Nanny* is immortalized with a 4K Ultra HD Blu-ray release within the Criterion Collection. Jusu is currently in development on her follow up feature film. *Monsters* are her happy place.

### **Reza Sixo Safai**

Reza Sixo Safai is a trailblazing Iranian-American filmmaker whose bold, genre-defying works have captivated audiences worldwide. Born in Iran and raised in America, Safai seamlessly weaves Eastern and Western narratives, crafting fearless stories that shatter cultural boundaries. His career took off with his short film "The Mario Valdez Story," winning second prize at Cannes, and he gained further acclaim with his role in the Sundance-winning "Circumstance." Safai further cemented his status as a genre pioneer by producing and co-starring in "A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night," the Sundance Iranian vampire sensation that garnered widespread praise. Safai's influence extends beyond traditional filmmaking, as he is a true innovator in the world of Artificial Intelligence, having helped create the first AI feature-length film. His genre-bending filmography includes works like the post-apocalyptic samurai western "Prisoners of the Ghostland" and an Iranian reimagining of "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant." His films have garnered numerous accolades at prestigious festivals such as

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Tribeca, SXSW, Sundance, and Cannes. With an unwavering dedication to storytelling, Safai will forever celebrate the unifying power of cinema.

**Michaela Ternasky-Holland**

Michaela A. Ternasky-Holland is a Peabody-nominated and Emmy award-winning director who specializes in creating socially impactful stories using immersive and interactive technology. As a recent nominee for the Producers Guild of America's Innovation Award, she is a recognized consultant, speaker, and thought leader, who has been listed as one of the 100 Original Voices of XR and Blooloo's 50 Immersive Influencers. Michaela's past work has been curated by top institutions and festivals, such as the New York Public Library, Museum of the Moving Image, Nobel Peace Center, The United Nations, Venice International Film Festival, SXSW, and Tribeca Festival. Her projects have also been featured in renowned press outlets, such as TIME, Forbes, The Guardian, Variety, and Hollywood Reporter.