

Tribeca Studios and Lilly Launch Filmmaker Incubator to Help Lead an Industry-Wide Shift in Narrative Around Disease Representation in Entertainment

Program builds on USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative study findings released earlier this year, supporting emerging filmmakers to bring authentic health stories to audiences

Original short films to premiere at 25th annual Tribeca Festival in June 2026



New York, NY – September 10, 2025 — Tribeca Studios today announced the launch of the Incubator Program, a new initiative with Eli Lilly and Company, to empower emerging filmmakers to more accurately and authentically represent disease in content.

The program is an outgrowth of [a landmark study](#), sponsored by Lilly – in line with its ongoing commitment to the health and wellbeing of patient communities and efforts to challenge misperception around and underrepresentation of disease – in partnership with Dr. Stacy L. Smith and the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. That study revealed that, while millions of Americans live with a health condition or disease, characters with five of the most prevalent (obesity, cancer, dementia, diabetes, and atopic dermatitis) rarely appeared on screen in film and television – and when they did, they were often reduced to stereotypes or one-dimensional roles.

The Incubator Program will kick off this fall with a Creative Summit in New York City, convening 20 filmmakers for mentorship, workshops, and industry guidance. From this group, three projects will be selected to receive end-to-end production support for their new short films, including development funding, mentorship from Tribeca Studios and industry leaders, and a guaranteed world premiere at Tribeca Festival 2026.

The program will be formally introduced on September 12, 2025, during Emmys Week in Los Angeles, at a special Tribeca X panel in partnership with The Female Quotient. The event will convene agency leaders and entertainment executives to spotlight the critical conversation around disease representation in media.

“Representation matters not just in who we see on screen, but in how their stories are told,” said **Jane Rosenthal, CEO and Co-Founder of Tribeca Enterprises**. “By supporting talented filmmakers to tell authentic health stories, we hope to inspire the industry to create more inclusive, human portrayals that reflect the world we live in.”

Program participants will also leverage a new content creation toolkit, which will be made available on Friday, September 15, 2025, by Lilly and the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative in response to the study findings. The toolkit was developed with guidance from industry experts and numerous patient advocacy organizations, it is intended to help foster more authentic and

inclusive representations of real patient experiences while guiding storytellers to reimagine how health narratives are crafted and shared.

“At Lilly, our work with patients has shown us that stories don’t just entertain. They shape culture and drive change,” said Lina Polimeni, Chief Corporate Brand Officer at Lilly. “The Annenberg study highlighted a glaring absence of authentic health journeys in film. Through the Incubator Program with Tribeca Studios and our new content creation toolkit, we’re giving emerging filmmakers the tools and mentorship to help portray these experiences with empathy, accuracy, and nuance while opening new avenues for powerful storytelling.”

Filmmakers interested in applying can learn more at tribecastudios@tribecafilm.com.

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About Tribeca Enterprises

Tribeca Enterprises is a multi-platform media and entertainment company that owns and operates the Tribeca Festival, content division Tribeca Studios, film distribution label Tribeca Films, and production company m ss ng p eces. With strong roots in independent film, Tribeca is synonymous with creative expression and entertainment. Founded in 2003 by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff, Tribeca Enterprises brings artists and audiences together to celebrate storytelling in all its forms, including film, TV, music, audio storytelling, games, and immersive. 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. 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.