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AFI ANNOUNCES 2025-2026 CANVA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

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Scholarship Program Extends AFIâ??s Partnership With Canva

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Los Angeles, CA, August 28, 2025 â?? Today, the American Film Institute (AFI) announced the recipients of the 2025-2026 Canva Fellowship at the AFI Conservatory. This marks the third year of Canva partnering with AFI to further their shared mission of educating and inspiring the next generation of filmmakers. The scholarship supports one Fellow from each of the six disciplines at the AFI Conservatory: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting.

The recipients of The Canva Fellowship for 2025-2026 are AFI First Year Fellows are Maghsoud Eghrari (Screenwriting), Brianna Kolybaba (Production Design), Mahsati Moorhead (Cinematography), Zhizong Qu (Editing), Aemilia Scott (Directing) and Allisa Tsukimori (Producing).



The Fellows will start their Master of Fine Arts filmmaking program at the AFI Conservatory on the AFI Campus in Los Angeles this August. Over the course of their two-year AFI Conservatory MFA program, each Fellow will receive a $40,000 scholarship, with a total of $240,000 awarded to the six recipients.



Susan Ruskin, Dean, AFI Conservatory/Executive Vice President, American Film Institute

â??At the AFI Conservatory, weâ??re committed to bringing emerging filmmakers together through learning the craft of storytelling,â?• said Susan Ruskin, Dean of the AFI Conservatory. â??For the third consecutive year, weâ??re proud to partner with Canva to help our Fellows amplify their voices as they grow into leaders in their creative communities and bring a wide range of perspectives to audiences around the world.â?•

The second class of The Canva Fellowship at the AFI Conservatory recently shared their thoughts after completing their first year of their education at AFI.



Kate Marsden, Global Head of Brand Partnerships and Design School at Canva

â??Weâ??re incredibly proud to mark our third year of partnership with AFI, continuing our support for this vital fellowship. At Canva, we strongly believe in empowering the next generation of visual storytellers, and itâ??s truly inspiring to see these emerging creators flourish and bring their unique visions to life through this program,â?• said Kate Marsden, Global Head of Brand Partnerships and Design School at Canva. â?•

About the 2025-2026 Recipients

Maghsoud â??Hamiâ?• Eghrari â?? Screenwriting Fellow

Maghsoud â??Hamiâ?• Eghrari moved to the U.S. from Iran in 2017 and recently graduated from The University of Texas at Dallas where he earned a BS in Healthcare Studies. Driven by a passion for storytelling, he pivoted to filmmaking. Since 2022, he has co-directed large-scale theatrical productions, A NEW DRESS FOR MONA and THE KINGFISHERâ??S WING. His work in coordinating intensive community-building programs in underserved Dallas neighborhoods inspired him to write â??Even Birds Have a Nest,â?• his fiction work published in â??The Southern Quillâ?• in 2023. In 2024, Eghrari created the short films WRONG WHITE and BLIND SPOT, marking his filmmaking debut.

Brianna Kolybaba â?? Production Design Fellow

Brianna Kolybaba is a Canadian-Ukrainian film, theater, and opera designer. She brings her passion for world-building through design. She has a BFA in Theatre Design from the University of Alberta. She was a contributor of Prague Quadrennial Performance Design and Space conference in 2019 and 2023. Kolybaba won the Outstanding Production Design Award at FAVA Fest in 2024 for her work on the short NIGIQTUQ á??á??á? á?•á? . Her credits include BEFORE I CHANGE MY MIND, THE LAND OF NOD, UNSPEAKABLE, and THE MURDER OF JONBENET RAMSEY.

Zhizong â??Jasonâ?• Qu â?? Editing Fellow

Zhizong â??Jasonâ?• Qu is a recent graduate of SCAD, with a BFA in Film and TV and a minor in Sound Editing. Qu is interested in editing narratives and trailers while also having a passion for production audio. He will often do both production audio and editing on the same project to get the best audio and workflow. Qu is currently editing the feature film, SECRETS OF SAVANNAH.

Aemilia Scott â?? Directing Fellow

Aemilia Scott graduated from Columbia University with a degree in History. Before directing and writing she worked as an actor in TV, Film and at Second City Chicago. Her most recent short film, HELP ME UNDERSTAND, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Her first short film, BEST IF USED BY, premiered at Clermont-Ferrand and won a BAFTA LA Award at Aspen Shortsfest. Her feature screenplay,â?•Three Hours,â?• was a semifinalist for the Academy Nicholl Screenwriterâ??s prize and won the Blacklist/Cassian Elwes Screenwriterâ??s Fellowship. Scottâ??s feature screenplay, â??Donna,â?• was a finalist at the Austin Screenwriterâ??s Competition.

Mahsati Moorhead â?? Cinematography Fellow

Mahsati Moorhead is a graduate of Spelman College with a BA in Photography and Cultural Anthropology. She studied in Paris and London assisting cinematographer Bradford Young, ASC, with film installations and Tribe 7 archives. She interned at TRIBE7 London, worked with Rap Research Lab and supported Simone Leighâ??s â??Loophole of Retreatâ?• at the Venice Biennale. Moorheadâ??s film AUSPICIOUS RETURN screened at BlackStar Film Festival and Maryland Film Festival and is featured in programs at Georgetown University and Duke Ellington School. She has worked in the camera and art departments on SPACE JAM, REALLY LOVE, AS TOLD TO G/D THYSELF, THE KING & AND THE VIKING, and the Telfar brand.

Allisa Tsukimori â?? Producing Fellow

Allisa Tsukimori is an Australian Japanese producer based in Queensland, Australia. She has produced the feature film THE AEGEAN as well as PLANTED, an eight-episode web series. Outside of her work in film, Tsukimori has earned her Bachelor of Laws (LLBHons) from Queensland University of Technology and has built a legal career focused on employment and discrimination law working in the not-for-profit space.

About the American Film Institute (AFI)

The American Film Institute (AFI) is a nonprofit organization with a mandate to champion the moving image as an art form. Established in 1967, AFI launched the first comprehensive history of American film and sparked the movement for film preservation in the United States. In 1969, AFI opened the doors of the AFI Conservatory, a graduate-level program to train narrative filmmakers. The Conservatory, which counts Deniese Davis, Affonso GonÃ§alves, Susannah Grant, Matthew Libatique, David Lynch, Melina Matsoukas and Rachel Morrison as Alumni, is ranked the #1 film school in America. AFIâ??s enduring traditions include the AFI Life Achievement Award, which honors the masters for work that has stood the test of time; AFI AWARDS, which celebrates the creative ensembles of the most outstanding screen stories of the year; and scholarly efforts such as the AFI Catalog of Feature Films and the AFI Archive that preserve film history for future generations. AFI exhibition programs include AFI FEST and year-round exhibition at the AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center in Maryland. AFI Movie Club is a destination for movie lovers from around the world to celebrate and engage with the art form every day. Other pioneering programs include workshops aimed at increasing diversity in the storytelling community, including AFI DWW+ and the AFI Cinematography Intensive for Women. Read about all of these programs and more at AFI.com and follow us on social media at Facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute, YouTube.com/AFI, X.com/AmericanFilm, TikTok.com/@americanfilminstitute and Instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute.

About the AFI Conservatory

The AFI Conservatory opened its doors in 1969 to an inaugural class that included Terrence Malick, Caleb Deschanel and Paul Schrader. Today, the Conservatory offers a two-year MFA degree in six filmmaking disciplines: Cinematography, Directing, Editing, Producing, Production Design and Screenwriting. In a collaborative production environment, AFI Fellows learn to master the art of storytelling, collectively creating up to 175 films a year. Fellows actively participate in the entire life cycle of a film, from development through production and exhibition.

Alumni of this elite program, ranging from modern masters to bold new voices defining the state of the art form, include Andrea Arnold, Darren Aronofsky, Ari Aster, Deniese Davis, Sam Esmail, Brad Falchuk, Affonso GonÃ§alves, Susannah Grant, Liz Hannah, Patty Jenkins, Janusz KamiÅ?ski, Matthew Libatique, David Lynch, Melina Matsoukas, Polly Morgan, Rachel Morrison and Wally Pfister, among others.

About Canva

Launched in 2013, Canva is the worldâ??s leading all-in-one platform for visual communication and collaboration. Built to empower everyone to design, the company serves the creative and design needs of enterprises, small businesses, consumers, and students in more than 190 countries worldwide. Whether youâ??re a novice taking your first steps in design, or a creative professional seeking powerful tools, Canva ensures users have what they need to transform an idea into something beautiful. Underpinned by the worldâ??s most comprehensive library of designer-made content, Canva is powered by a suite of products and proprietary AI tools which elevate how individuals and teams create, collaborate, and communicate with ease.

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1. #AFI
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