



**2019
SOUTH
SUMMIT
REPORT**

SOUTH SUMMIT OBJECTIVE



new orleans
film festival

Building on the inaugural South Summit of October 2018, which sought to envision what it could mean for Southern filmmaking to thrive, the 2019 South Summit was held during the annual New Orleans Film Festival on October 21st from 9am - 3pm and brought together thought leaders, curators, and artists to explore strategies to elevate regional voices, incite social change, and encourage inclusivity and accountable curation.

Through this annual convening, the South Summit is designed to spark collaborative ideation among artists and institutional leaders, expand networks, and spotlight strong work being done across the region by Southern artists.

Topics explored at the Summit included:

- Accountable curation in the South
- Countering extractive storytelling
- Challenges and needs of Southern artists

We were interested in providing more opportunities for peer-to-peer support and thought leadership, and for this year, our refined focus was not just at the executive leadership level but individuals working in programmatic spaces and serving as a conduit to bring programming to diverse audiences.



PARTNERS

The South Summit is produced by the New Orleans Film Society and is held in conjunction with the annual New Orleans Film Festival. This year's summit was designed through the collaboration of several thought partners, including:

- Clint Bowie, New Orleans Film Society
- Jackie Clay, Coleman Center for the Arts
- Luisa Dantas, South Summit Facilitator
- Seth Gadsden, Indie Grits Labs
- Nick Price, Reel South
- Sarah Pritchard, South Summit Coordinator
- Rachel Raney, Reel South
- Amada Torruella, Indie Grits Labs
- Fallon Young, New Orleans Film Society

South Summit is made possible by:



Additional hospitality and travel support from:



PARTICIPANTS

- Alyssa Armand, Atlanta Film Festival
 - Ashley Artis, Creative Capital (New York)
 - Michele Baker, Crossroads Film Festival (Oxford, Miss.)
 - Julie Bordelon, Southern Screen Film Festival (Lafayette, La.)
 - Clint Bowie, New Orleans Film Society
 - Daniela Capistrano, Filmmaker / DCAP Media (New Orleans)
 - Jackie Clay, Coleman Center for the Arts (Coleman, Ala.)
 - Warren Cockerham, Florida Experimental Film/Video Festival (Tampa, Fla.)
 - Brenda Coughlin, Filmmaker / Sundance Film Institute (New York)
 - Luisa Dantas, Filmmaker (New Orleans)
 - elizabet elliot (Alabama Contemporary Art Center, Mobile, Ala.)
 - Christopher Escobar, Atlanta Film Society
 - jazz franklin, Filmmaker / Patois International Human Rights Film Festival (New Orleans)
 - Seth Gadsden, Filmmaker / Indie Grits Labs (Columbia, S.C.)
 - Michael Gibbons, Creative Capital (New York)
 - Shana Griffin, Activist, Patois International Human Rights Film Festival (New Orleans)
 - Michelle Hamada, Tribeca Film Institute (New York)
 - Jessie Haynes, The Helis Foundation (New Orleans)
 - Maori Holmes, Blackstar Film Festival (Philadelphia, Penn.)
 - Jason Fitzroy Jeffers, Filmmaker / Third Horizon Film Festival / Oolite Arts (Miami, Fla.)
 - Jonathan Kieran, New Orleans Film Festival
 - Anna Lee, Working Films (Wilmington, N.C.)
 - Logan Lockner, BURNAWAY (Atlanta, Ga.)
 - Kate Mason, New Orleans Film Festival
 - Richard McCabe, Ogden Museum of Southern Art (New Orleans)
 - Kiyoko McCrae, Filmmaker / New Orleans Film Society
 - Darcy McKinnon, Filmmaker / New Orleans Video Access Center
 - Lydia Nichols, Activist, Filmmaker (New Orleans)
 - Lauren Pabst, MacArthur Foundation, Chicago
 - Robert Patla, HBO (Los Angeles)
 - Ryan Pearson, Detroit Narrative Agency
 - Jolene Pinder, Kartemquin Films (Chicago)
 - Michelle Pizzimenti, HBO (Los Angeles)
 - Suzanne Porath, FLEX Florida Experimental Film/Video Festival (Tampa, Fla.)
 - Nick Price, Reel South (Houston, Tex.)
 - Sarah Pritchard, New Orleans Film Society
 - Rachel Raney, Reel South/UNC-TV (Raleigh, N.C.)
 - PJ Raval, Filmmaker / New Day Films (Austin)
 - Lauren Rector, Atlanta Film Festival
 - Kristina Kay Robinson, Filmmaker / Antenna (New Orleans)
 - Sapana Sakya, Center for Asian American Media (San Francisco)
 - Jennifer Samani, New Orleans Film Society
 - George Scheer, New Orleans Contemporary Arts Center
 - Jenny Slattery, Southern Documentary Fund (Wilmington, N.C.)
 - Rebecca Snedeker, New Orleans Center for the Gulf South at Tulane University
 - Ashley Teamer, Filmmaker (New Orleans)
 - Kendra Thompson, Joan Mitchell Center (New Orleans)
 - Amada Torruella, Filmmaker / Indie Grits Labs (Los Angeles)
 - Chloe Walters Wallace, Filmmaker / Firelight Media (New Orleans)
 - ill weaver, Detroit Narrative Agency
 - Fallon Young, New Orleans Film Society
 - Jordan Young, South Arts (Atlanta, Ga.)
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KEY LESSONS & TAKE-AWAYS

Process Matters

There was a strong emphasis placed on examining filmmakers' processes in working with communities they're representing in order to determine to what extent a project is extractive or accountable.

- Action idea: Create community benefit agreements between filmmakers and communities to be as explicit as possible about how a project is intended to benefit the community it represents (i.e., social norms change, policy change, awareness raising, etc.).

Walking the Talk

Organizations like film festivals, museums, and other arts institutions need to embody the values of accountability, transparency, and equity that they expect of filmmakers in their own internal culture and policies.

- Action idea: Institutions should examine their policies and procedures to adopt an equity framework at all levels, questioning not only who is in the room but also whether people are equitably compensated for the work they do. Institutions should create clear professional development pathways to cultivate the leadership of people of color, women, and LGBTQ individuals.



Accountability Takes Time

Many groups stressed that building trust and real accountability in communities takes time. Filmmakers and funders must be willing to invest in longer-term projects in order to honor the communities they're working with.

- Action idea: Engage funders in a dialogue about what it means to truly support accountable storytelling, including the willingness to invest in longer-term projects.

Breaking Down the Silos

Intersectionality is key to accountable storytelling: understanding that our identities don't exist in isolation from one another and that there are many different stories to tell about every community.

- Action idea: For programmers, rather than curating work according to one identity category, integrate an equity framework into all curation decisions in order to showcase intersectional and multifaceted stories.

Southern Stories Are National Stories

The South is a microcosm of larger issues facing the whole country. Southern programmers and institutions have an opportunity to leverage the unique position of the South to demand that stories told about the region are accountable and representative of its diversity.

- Action idea: National organizations should make efforts to include programmatic voices from varied geographic locales and representing communities outside important hubs like NY and LA in order to better understand the cultural context.

Collaboration is Key

Collaboration across disciplines and among various organizational models can help to elevate more diverse stories. Good collaborators can catch each other's blind spots and offer access to resources or relationships to strengthen projects.

- Action idea: Institutions can offer more opportunities for guest curation or co-curation in order to broaden the perspectives represented in their programming.
- Action idea: Southern institutions can collaborate to share mentorship opportunities, labs, and other resources for emerging and underrepresented filmmakers.



BUILD BRIDGES, NOT GATES

South Summit participants agreed that as a field, making a conceptual, operative shift from thinking and acting as "gatekeepers" wielding "power over" artists and communities to "connectors" holding "power with" constituencies foregrounds and manifests our collective values of equity, inclusivity, accountability, and transparency.

South Summit intends to annually provide regional and national arts administrators, curators, and artists the opportunity to connect and forge alliances and common, inclusive frameworks that support our shared objectives — to develop underrepresented voices and better support cultural production in our regional communities.

For more details on the South Summit, contact Clint Bowie at clint@neworleansfilmsociety.org

