KENYA GILLESPIE

WRITER-DIRECTOR-COMPOSER
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EDUCATION

2017 - 2022 **Master of Fine Arts in Film & Media Production**, University of Texas at Austin,
Department of Radio-Television-Film

- Thesis title: *Give*
- Thesis supervisor: Ya'Ke Smith
- Committee members: Andrew Shea & Richard Lewis

2011 - 2013 **Master of Music in Composition**, Rice University, Shepherd School of Music

- Thesis title: *The Mirror of Illusion* (alternate title: *Diptychon*)
- Thesis supervisor: Karim Al-Zand
- Committee members: Anthony Brandt & Arthur Gottschalk

2006 - 2010 **Bachelor of Arts in Music (Intensive)**, Yale University

- Magna Cum Laude with Distinction in Music

HONORS AND AWARDS

- **2026 Austin Film Society Doc Intensive participant for feature documentary *Remedy***
- NOFS South Pitch Semifinalist in 2025 for *What Are You Into?*
- Won Best International Short for *Give* at the New Renaissance Film Festival Amsterdam in 2024
- Won Special Jury Mention for Best Student Short for *Give* at the KASHISH Pride Film Festival in 2024
- Nominated for Best Original Score for Short Film for *Give* at the International Sound and Film Music Festival in 2023
- Winner of Best Student Short for *Michelle* at the 2021 Oak Cliff Film Festival
- Professional Development Award at UT-Austin for *Michelle*
- **Nominated for the short film Queer Palm at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival for *Jeremiah***
- Nominated for the Jury Prize for Best American Short Film at the 2019 Champs Élysées Film Festival for *Jeremiah*
- Winner of Best Score at the 2019 Brooklyn Horror Film Festival for *Jeremiah*
- Recipient of the 2019 Warren Skaaren Endowed Presidential Scholarship
- Nominated for the 2019 Kodak Excellence in the Craft of Filmmaking Award

- Winner of the 2019 SXSW Longhorn Denius Student Showcase for *Pray for Dottie*
- Winner of the 2018 SXSW Longhorn Denius Student Showcase for *The Crystal City*
- Recipient of the 2018 Dina Sherzer Award for Documentary Filmmaking
- Nominated for the 2018 BAFTA Student Film Awards for *The Crystal City*
- Performance of master's thesis *The Mirror of Illusion* by the Shepherd School Chamber Orchestra on their 2015 subscription concert
- Commissioned by the Rice University School of Architecture's PLAT Journal to write music for their 2013 issue release
- Commissioned by the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) and Musiqa to write a film soundtrack for their "Altered Tracks" concert in 2012
- Commissioned by the Salina Youth Symphony to write an orchestra piece for their 50th Anniversary Celebration Concert in Salina, KS in 2012
- Named an "Emerging Composer" by the New York Art Ensemble Young Composer Competition in 2009

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Recipient of the 2022 Austin Film Society Grant for *Give*
- Recipient of the Moody Innovation Grant for *Give* in 2021
- Finalist of the Sundance Institute Uprise Grant Fund for *Give* in 2021
- Recipient of the 2020-2021 University Graduate Continuing Fellowship at UT-Austin
- Recipient of the 2020 Austin Film Society Grant for *Give*
- Recipient of the 2019 Austin Film Society Grant for *Michelle*
- Recipient of the 2019 Austin Film Society Travel Grant for *Jeremiah*
- Recipient of the 2017-2018 Graduate School Creative Fellowship at UT-Austin
- Recipient of the Moody Innovation Grant for *Michelle* in 2019
- Recipient of the Michael P. Hammond Preparatory Program Brown Fellow Scholarship and Stipend in 2011 and 2012 at the Shepherd School of Music

PRESS

MovieMaker Magazine. "A Sacrifice, a Scarf and a Courageous Action Figure Highlight NFMLA's InFocus: Veteran Cinema Program" by Lauren Muniz. 21 January 2025. https://www.moviemaker.com/nfmla-veteran-cinema/

D Magazine. "At the Oak Cliff Film Festival, Students Finally Got a Chance to Show Their Art" by Austin Zook. 1 July 2021. https://www.dmagazine.com/arts-entertainment/2021/07/at-the-oak-cliff-film-festival-students-finally-got-a-chance-to-show-their-art/

Character Media. “Masala: Filmmakers Jeff Fong, Marie Jamora and Kenya Gillespie Talk the 36th Annual Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival” by Cu Fleshman. 3 Nov 2020. https://charactermedia.com/masala-filmmakers-jeff-fong-marie-jamora-and-kenya-gillespie-talk-the-36th-annual-los-angeles-asian-pacific-film-festival/

Dekkoo. “Jeremiah is a Well-crafted Nine-minute Coming-out Horror Story.” 4 Aug 2020. https://dekkoo.blog/2020/08/04/jeremiah-is-a-well-crafted-nine-minute-coming-out-horror-story/

Lights Camera Austin. “*Interview:* Kenya Gillespie, director, ‘Jeremiah’” by Robert Sims. 19 Sept 2019. http://www.lightscameraaustin.net/kenya-gillespie-september-2019.html

World of Shorts. “Mapping Your Mind.” 14 May 2019. https://issuu.com/daazo/docs/cannes2019_a2cad5421241aa

Centre National du Cinéma et de l’Image Animée. “Cannes 2019: Films in the Running for the Queer Palm.” 29 Apr 2019. https://www.cnc.fr/cinema/actualites/cannes-2019--les-films-en-lice-pour-la-queer-palm_983644

Cineuropa. “Cannes Reveals the Short Films in the Running for the Palme d’Or” by Fabien Lemercier. 19 Apr 2019. https://cineuropa.org/en/newsdetail/371123/

FILMS

Writer/Director/Editor/Composer

upcoming **What Are You Into?**, fiction short film
- Currently in development

upcoming **Remedy**, documentary feature film
- Currently in post-production

2023 **Give**, fiction short film
- Currently streaming on Dekkoo
- Streaming soon in the fall of 2025 on GagaOOlala

2019 **Michelle**, fiction short film

2018 **Jeremiah**, fiction short film (released in 2020)
- Acquired by international sales agent SND Films
- Currently streaming on Kanopy, Dekkoo, and GagoOOlala

2018 **Pray for Dottie**, fiction short film
- Co-written and co-directed with John David DeVirgiliis

2017 **The Crystal City**, documentary short film

FESTIVALS

2023 - 2024 **Give**

- **deadCenter Film Festival, world premiere**
- Festival Internacional de Cine de Quito
- Aesthetica Short Film Festival
- NewFilmmakers Los Angeles
- Rio LGBTQIA+ Festival Internacional de Cinema
- Tallgrass Film Festival
- Oxford Film Festival
- El Paso Film Festival
- Festival Internacional de Cine Corto de Cali
- Sehsüchte International Student Film Festival
- New Renaissance Film Festival Amsterdam
- LGBT+ Film Festival Poland
- KASHISH Pride Film Festival
- Ortigia Film Festival
- Filmfort
- Phoenix Film Festival
- aGLIFF/Prism Film Festival
- Catalina Film Festival
- Tacoma Film FestivaldeadCenter Film Festival

2020 - 2021 **Michelle**

- **Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, world premiere**
- Austin Film Festival
- HollyShorts Film Festival
- CAAMFest
- Oak Cliff Film Festival
- Montclair Film Festival
- Aesthetica Short Film Festival
- Asian American International Film Festival
- Tallgrass Film Festival
- San Diego Asian Film Festival
- Boston Asian American Film Festival
- El Paso Film Festival

2019 - 2020 **Jeremiah**

- **Cannes Film Festival (Cinéfondation), international premiere**
- Fantastic Fest
- Outfest LA
- Cleveland International Film Festival
- Nashville Film Festival
- Toronto Inside Out LGBT Film Festival
- Champs Élysées Film Festival

- Sidewalk Film Festival
- NewFest
- Brooklyn Horror Film Festival
- Oak Cliff Film Festival
- Akbank Short Film Festival
- Vancouver Queer Film Festival
- Taiwan International Queer Film Festival
- Spokane International Film Festival
- KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival
- New Renaissance Film Festival Amsterdam
- Austin Gay & Lesbian International Film Festival
- North Carolina Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
- Eureka University Film Festival
- Oslo/Fusion International Film Festival
- San Diego Asian American Film Festival
- Queer Screen Mardi Gras Film Festival
- Houston Asian American Pacific Islander Film Festival
- Sohome Horror Film Festival
- El Paso Film Festival
- Stuff MX Film Festival

2018 - 2019 **The Crystal City**

- St. Louis International Film Festival
- Tallgrass Film Festival
- San Diego Asian Film Festival
- Philadelphia Asian-American Film Festival
- Nichi Bei Foundation's Films of Remembrance
- Oak Cliff Film Festival
- Fastnet Film Festival
- SXSW Longhorn Denius Student Showcase

2019 **Pray for Dottie**

- SXSW Longhorn Denius Student Showcase

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2021 - present **Lecturer**, Texas State University

- Teach 3-4 classes per semester of TH 1353: Film Production Practices, TH 4363 Directing for Film, and TH 4373 Advanced Directing for Film

2018 - 2022 **Graduate Teaching Assistant**, University of Texas at Austin, Radio-Television-Film

- RTF 881KB: Principles of Film & TV Production (Spring 2020, Spring 2019)
- RTF 346K: Introduction to Editing (Spring 2022)
- RTF 366K: Creating a Web Series (Spring 2020)
- RTF 367D: Directing Workshop (Fall 2019)
- RTF 343: Advanced Narrative Production (Fall 2019)

- RTF 318: Intro to Image & Sound (Fall 2018, Spring 2019)
- RTF 367K: Producing Film & Television (Fall 2018)

2018 - 2019 **Summer Film Camp Instructor & Assistant**, University of Texas at Austin, Radio-Television-Film

- Served as lead instructor for high school film camps in summer 2019
- Served as assistant for middle school and high school film camps in summer 2018

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2018 - present **Freelance Filmmaker**, Austin, TX

- Shot and edited the film of the world premiere of Kurt Stallmann's installation piece *Listening Bayou* at the Buffalo Bayou Park Cisten in Houston, TX in fall 2025
- Shot and edited the film of the world premiere of Kurt Stallmann's multimedia pieces *The Chapel in the Hive* and *The Fruit and the Work* at the Moody Center for the Arts in Houston, TX in fall 2025
- Shot and edited the film of the world premiere of Shih-Hui Chen's multimedia piece *Birds are Real: Ambushed from Ten Directions* at the Shepherd School of Music in Houston, TX in fall 2024
- Edited a short documentary on a WWII POW camp in Tenryumura Japan for Middlebury College in summer 2024
- Shot and edited the film of the world premiere of Shih-Hui Chen's multimedia piece *sisila ila ila* at the Asia Society Texas Center in Houston, TX in fall 2023
- Shot and edited the film of the world premiere of Shih-Hui Chen's multimedia cello concerto *Guojun is Not Coming Home for Dinner* at Stude Concert Hall in Houston, TX in fall 2023
- Shot and edited the film of the world premiere of Shih-Hui Chen's multimedia chamber operatic poem *or/and* at the Asia Society Texas Center in Houston, TX in fall 2022
- Edited the film of Shih-Hui Chen's chamber piece *Perpetual Games* for the Loop38 Contemporary Ensemble at the Blaffer Art Museum in Houston, TX in fall 2021
- Created the visuals and edited a concert film for composer Shih-Hui Chen's work-in-progress opera *Messages* at the Matchbox Theatre in Houston, TX in summer 2019
- Shot and edited a short concert film for the Menil Collection's Cy Twombly Gallery in Houston, TX in spring 2019

2019 **Casting Intern**, Vicky Boone Casting, Austin, TX

- Assisted casting sessions by filming auditions, signing in actors, assessing auditions, and helping pick and schedule

background actors for film and TV shoots, including the TV show *SKAM: Austin*.

2011 - 2016 **Freelance Poster Designer**, Houston, TX
- Designed posters for contemporary classical music concerts and lectures.

2012 & 2015 **Video Assistant**, Bruce Bryant (film director), Houston, TX
- Marked video cues for the video simulcasts of Paris Opéra Ballet's production of *Giselle* and Washington National Opera's production of *La Cenerentola*

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP

2026 **Coordinator**, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
- Organized a screening of the film *Make It Look Real* and panel discussion on intimacy coordination in film with Students Against Violence and University Health Services

2024 - present **Faculty Advisor**, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
- Served as the supervisor for Eva De Guelle's honors capstone in Theatre, Dance & Film
- Served as mentor for senior capstone filmmakers Emery Jones, Amber Adamez, and Santiago Bazan

2024 - present **Faculty Screening Coordinator**, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
- Organize and advertise for the annual faculty screening showcase of work

2025 **Associate Track Coordinator**, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX
- Associate Track Coordinator for the Directing Track with Professor Annie Silverstein
- Determined the goals, learning outcomes, resource needs, and the progression of directing track classes for the upcoming BFA in Film

2025 **Juror**, Austin Asian American Film Festival, Austin, TX
- Served on the jury to award films in the feature film and short film documentary film categories

2023 **Reviewer**, Austin Film Society, Austin, TX
- Reviewed and recommended grants from filmmakers across Texas for the Austin Film Society's annual short film grant

SKILLS

- Editing: Avid Media Composer, Adobe Premiere Pro

- Composing software: Finale, Logic Pro
- Other: Final Draft, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe After Effects, Sound Devices 633, Sony and Panasonic cameras, MS Office, Mac OS

LANGUAGES

- English: Fluent
- French: Intermediate
- Japanese: Beginner

REFERENCES

Andrew Shea
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Department of Radio-Television-Film
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Ya'Ke Smith
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