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Comedy Central, Color Of Change, and Define American partner with Yes, And... Laughter Lab on Comedy and Social Justice Program to Showcase Diverse Comedians

Comedy Writers and Producers Francesca Ramsey, Roy Wood Jr. and Other Comedy Talents to Help Select Participants

Partners Include ViacomCBS, Define American, NBC, Netflix, Pillars Fund and More

NEW YORK & WASHINGTON, DC -- As Hollywood looks for new opportunities for diverse talent, the [Yes, And... Laughter Lab](#) announced that it is accepting applications for its 2021 industry incubator and talent development program. The *Yes And... Laughter Lab* is a competitive incubation lab, pitch program and showcase that sources, trains, and builds industry and social justice networks for the best diverse comedy writers and performers creating new comedy about topics that matter, with a focus on BIPOC, immigrant, Muslim, LGBTQ, and female talent.

Created in 2019 by the non-profit innovation lab and research center [Center for Media & Social Impact](#) (CMSI) and creative agency [Moore+Associates](#), the *Yes, And...Laughter Lab* is designed to introduce diverse comedians to the entertainment industry, social justice organizations, philanthropists and activists who can help bring their work into the entertainment marketplace – and into movements for social change.

“Comedy is one of the most powerful ways to hear from a diverse array of people sharing their lived experiences, and there are too many brilliant comedy voices whose stories are still not being heard. The Yes, And Laughter Lab is designed to help change that,” **said co-founder and co-director, Caty Borum Chattoo.** “We created this lab to accelerate partnerships between the entertainment industry and social change organizations, in support of comedy

creators committed to having a cultural impact in both arenas," **co-founder and co-director, Mik Moore shared.**

Yes, And...Laughter Lab's [partners](#) include leaders in comedy and social change, including 3Arts, Above Average, Artists First, Caring Across Generations, Color Creative, Color Of Change, Comedy Central, Define American, GloNation, Harness, Haven Entertainment, Imagine, MGM, MPAC Hollywood Bureau, National Lampoon, NBC, Netflix, Opportunity Agenda, Pillars Fund, Powderkeg Media, Spotify, TBS, Topple Productions, truTV, ViacomCBS, Wise Entertainment, and WV Entertainment.

In an effort to merge the power of the entertainment industry with the expertise of activists and advocates, the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* collaborates with a variety of experts whose work functions at the intersection of Hollywood and the social justice world.

Define American's Chief Strategy Officer, Elizabeth Grizzle Voorhees said, "We are living in an unprecedented cultural moment in this country and Define American recognizes the power of comedic voices to humanize the most pivotal social issues of our time. We are honored to be included as a part of the leadership committee for the 2021 *Yes, And...Laughter Lab* and support the amazing work of the lab and its partners."

"Yes, comedy can crack us up... and it can change our minds and even change the world," **said Erika Soto Lamb, vice president of social impact strategy for Comedy Central.** "With so many pressing issues, there is no better time to identify and elevate new and diverse comedians to help us understand our biggest social justice problems and find ways to come together to fix them -- that's what the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* is uniquely here to do."

"When it feels like the issues facing us as a society are too daunting, depressing and complicated to tackle, comedy offers much needed relief. Comedians of color hold the power to break down and humanize topics that most impact their own lives, creating an important space for their communities to laugh about and reflect on critical issues," **said Kristen Marston, culture & entertainment advocacy director at Color Of Change.** "Color Of Change is proud to partner with *Yes, And...Laughter Lab* and elevate the voices of underrepresented talent and foster social change in the industry and beyond."

From February 1 to March 1, 2021, the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* is accepting applications from comedians who are creating all types of comedy for all kinds of platforms. Applications will be judged by the strength of their originality and creativity of their comedy, potential for social impact, and practicality of development.

Projects will be juried by a [Selection Committee](#) which includes Aparna Nancherla, Baron Vaughan, Franchesca Ramsey, Jeffrey P. Jones, Roy Wood, Jr., Ryan Cunningham, Wyatt Cenac, and others.

The *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* will select 20 finalists for a two-day training in June, and, from those finalists, choose at least ten winners. The winners will receive \$2,000 in funding to

support their project and will participate in the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab*'s annual showcase events, in September and October, to present their comedy projects to a hand-picked audience of industry partners and allies. Winners will receive travel stipends if events are to take place in person.

Previous winners of the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* include comedians like [Jeff Hiller](#) for their project *The Designing Women Monologues*, an hour long stand-up show looking at gender roles of today through the lens of a feminist sitcom from the past; [Thaddeus McCants](#) for his TV series *Lit Lounge*, a workplace comedy about a recently incarcerated man's experience starting a POC-owned weed dispensaries; [Keisha Zollar](#) and [Sasha Stewart](#) for their docuseries *Let's Get Physical* that utilizes humor, patient testimonials, and medical experts to debunk the myths and misogyny around women's bodies; and [Aizzah Fatima](#) and [Atheer Yacoub](#)'s *Muslim Girls DTF: Discuss Their Faith*, a sketch show written and performed by an all Muslim cast about topics that plague Muslim women today like sex, dating, body hair, and pork.

The Yes, And...Laughter Lab is funded by [Comedy Central](#), [Doris Duke Foundation](#), [Luminate](#), and the [Pop Culture Collaborative](#).

Applications for the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* are due by 11:59pm EST Monday, March 1, 2021. Visit the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* website to learn more and apply: <https://yesandlaughterlab.com/>

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ABOUT THE YES, AND... LAUGHTER LAB

Yes, And... Laughter Lab is a competitive incubation lab, pitch program and showcase that uplifts the best comedy writers and performers creating new comedy about topics that matter, with a focus on BIPOC, immigrant, Muslim, LGBTQ, and female talent.

Follow *Yes, And Laughter Lab* on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) at @YALLcomedy.