

Contact:  
Clare Kenny  
Program Director  
clare@yesandlaughterlab.com

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



### **'YES AND... LAUGHTER LAB' ANNOUNCES 2021 SHOWCASE WINNERS**

*Twelve comedy projects developed by 19 writers and performers selected to Yes And... Laughter Lab's 2021 Comedy showcase tackle topics including anti-Asian-American bigotry, marijuana legalization, LGBTQ "conversation therapy," racial bias in education, and Native American boarding school abuse*

*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*

*34 program partners include Netflix, ViacomCBS, Comedy Central, NBCUniversal, Define American, Pillars Fund*

**New York, NY - Thursday, July 15, 2021** - [Yes And... Laughter Lab](#), 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, today announced the slate of winners for its annual showcases in New York and Los Angeles.

Full list of program winners below.

Created in 2018 by the non-profit innovation lab and research center [Center for Media & Social Impact](#) (CMSI) at American University 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.

For the third consecutive year, in February, the Yes, And... Laughter Lab accepted hundreds of applications from diverse comedians from across the United States for its competitive incubation lab. Applications were judged by the strength of their originality and creativity of their comedy, potential for social impact, and practicality of development. Projects were [judged by a Selection Committee](#) which included Aparna Nancherla (*BoJack Horseman*), Baron Vaughan (*Grace and Frankie*), Franchesca Ramsey (*iCarly*), Jeffrey P. Jones (Peabody Awards), Naomi Ekperigin (*Mythic Quest*), Prashanth

Venkataramanujam (*Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj*), Roy Wood, Jr. (*The Daily Show*), Ryan Cunningham (*Inside Amy Schumer*), and Wyatt Cenac (*Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas*).

This year's winning projects touch on topics ranging from LGBTQ "conversion therapy," anti-Asian hate, mental health, and racial bias.

### **2021 Yes And... Laughter Lab Program Winners:**

#### **New York Showcase winners:**

1. ***Asian In Public*** by SJ Son & Woody Fu
  - *Asian In Public* is a sketch comedy series following SJ (Korean) and Woody (Chinese) as we Asiansplain what it's like being last in the race conversation. It's Key & Peele but Asian.
2. ***CameronTown*** by Sheri Bradford
  - After living (and metaphorically dying) in LA for over a decade, Shannon Cameron, a millennial Black woman, returns to her conservative South Carolina hometown to start a cannabis farm on her family's historical land.
3. ***Camp*** by Air Durnell & Maddie Smith
  - *Camp* is a 30-minute comedic television series about married lesbian couple, Leo and Jo Powers, who re-open their inherited gay "conversion" camp as a secret queer utopia for children who were originally sent to pray the gay away.
4. ***Getting Schooled with Chris De La Cruz*** by Christopher De La Cruz
  - *Getting Schooled*, hosted by high school teacher Chris De La Cruz, explores the intricacies and inequities of American education policy with plenty of humor to help the learning go down. In Mr. DLC's class, an array of monologue jokes, celebrity guest speakers, and out of studio "Field Trips" will show students young and old that it wasn't just you—it was the system all along.
5. ***Native Comedy at the Rock*** by Jackie Keliiaa
  - *Native Comedy at the Rock* is a multi-day comedy festival featuring Native comedians, sketch comedy groups and improvisers from all over Indian Country to perform on a central stage on Alcatraz Island, home of the Occupation of Alcatraz by Indians of All Tribes from 1969 to 1971. The festival is a celebration of Native comedy that blends humor with history, highlighting important Native activists and movements that have brought Native issues to the forefront.
6. ***Running*** by Adrienne Chalepah
  - A smartass runner at a Native American boarding school has one shot at graduating, if only two annoying ghosts would leave her alone.

#### **Los Angeles Showcase winners:**

7. ***Asian Women Can't Drive*** by Alex Song-Xia
  - *Asian Women Can't Drive* is a comedic film about Xixi, a queer first-gen Chinese American adult who can't drive, and Ming, her anxious immigrant mother who insists on being her driving instructor. As daughter struggles to turn left and mother struggles to remain calm, old grievances, family secrets, and Xixi herself are all forced to come out.
  
8. ***Bendecidas y Afortunadas (Blessed and Highly Favored)*** by Julieta Messmer & Marianne Amelinckx
  - Two spoiled immigrants come to the U.S. determined to make it in the Hollywood industry but when their destiny—and their visas—are held hostage by Immigration Services, they decide to make ends meet by taking a cash-paid job on a marijuana farm in Northern California.
  
9. ***Lifeline*** by Meredith Casey
  - *Lifeline* is a serialized dark comedy about a depressed young woman from a dysfunctional family who has to do community service at a suicide hotline after her own suicide attempt goes hilariously wrong.
  
10. ***Momo's Amerika*** by Abdallah Nabil & Ayman Samman
  - A jovial immigrant with a short attention span works various odd jobs to support his family while chasing the American dream as he creates his own version of America.
  
11. ***Public School*** by Kali Racquel
  - Benjamin Blackmon, a culturally out-of-touch, former corporate financier turned inexperienced principal gets a rude awakening when he learns he has been assigned to P.S. 13, the DMV of public schools located in the worst neighborhood in the city.
  
12. ***The AzN PoPi! Show*** by Anna Suzuki, Iliana Inocencio, Maya Deshmukh, & Angel Yau
  - After being scorned by the same woke white man, four vastly different Asian-American women in their 30's decide to form the "Dove campaign" of pop groups. A half-hour scripted comedy.

The *Yes, And... Laughter Lab* Showcases will take place Friday, September 17 at Caveat in New York City, and on Thursday, September 30 at Dynasty Typewriter in Los Angeles.

"This year's pitch showcases feature some of the most talented comedy writers and performers we've ever worked with," said **Mik Moore, co-director of the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab***. "They are telling the kinds of stories that are desperately needed in Hollywood right now, exploring complex, often sensitive issues with humor and wit."

"The comedians showcased in the *Laughter Lab* are not only hilarious, but they are sharing lived experiences that are often unseen in entertainment," said **Caty Borum Chattoo, co-director of the *Yes, And... Laughter Lab***. "Inviting a mix of entertainment industry and social justice leaders to hear from them creates opportunities not only for the comedians themselves, but for entertainment industry leaders

to meet the calls from a generation with new standards and expectations of Hollywood when it comes to diversity in representation.”

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 to present their comedy projects to a hand-picked audience of industry partners and allies.

Yes, And...Laughter Lab's partners include leaders in comedy and social change, including 3Arts, Above Average, Artists First, CAPE, Caring Across Generations, Color Creative, Color Of Change, Comedy Central, Define American, GLAAD, GloNation, Harness, Haven Entertainment, Imagine, Irony Point, Key Rat Inc., MGM, MPAC Hollywood Bureau, MuslimArc, National Lampoon, NBCUniversal, Netflix, Opportunity Agenda, Pillars Fund, Powderkeg Media, RespectAbility, Sierra Club, Spotify, TBS, Topple Productions, truTV, ViacomCBS, Wise Entertainment, and WV Entertainment.

The *Yes, And...Laughter Lab* is funded by [Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art's Building Bridges Program](#), [Luminate](#), and the [Pop Culture Collaborative](#), and sponsors include [Comedy Central](#), [Amazon Studios](#), [NBCUniversal](#) and [WarnerMedia](#).

###

### **About 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](#).