
Disney Directing Program Unveils 2022-2023 Participants

Disney General Entertainment Content (DGE) has selected the participants in its 2022-2023 DGE Directing Program. For the second consecutive year, the program will guarantee episodes to first-time television directors on a DGE scripted series.

Launched in 2001 and run by DGE's Creative Talent Development & Inclusion (CTDI) department, the DGE Directing Program previously provided access, mentorship, shadowing assignments and advanced professional development to directors on the cusp of episodic television directing. In partnership with participating Disney series, this year's program will commit episodes to directors on the following shows: "BUNK'D" (Disney Branded Television), "The Chi" (20th Television), "General Hospital" (ABC), "The Good Doctor" (ABC/ABC Signature), "The Rookie" (ABC/ABC Signature), "Single Drunk Female" (Freeform/20th Television) and "The Villains of Valley View" (Disney Branded Television). This is the first year the program will commit directing assignments within the ABC daytime scripted space ("General Hospital").

The 2022-2023 DGE Directing Program cohort includes director/actor Lilan Bowden (assigned to "Villains of Valley View"), actor-turned-director Phillip Rhys Chaudhary (assigned to "The Good Doctor"), on-air promos/commercial director Whitney Clinkscales (assigned to "General Hospital"), director/writer Shanrica Evans (assigned to "The Chi"), independent filmmaker Ahmed Ibrahim (assigned to "Single Drunk Female"), first assistant director TK Shom (assigned to "The Rookie") and costume designer-turned-director Keisha Stewart (assigned to "BUNK'D").

"We're pleased to once again guarantee episodes to talented, first-time television directors via our Directing Program," said Tim McNeal, senior vice president, Creative Talent Development & Inclusion. "We continue to be grateful for the ongoing support and partnership of our participating Disney productions, showrunners and producers, and our creative executives and senior leaders, who remain committed to fostering and championing diverse directing talent at our company."

The 2022-2023 DGE Directing Program will additionally provide its cohort with limited professional development, mentorship and access to the company's Directing Program alumni and creative executives/producers. Program directors will shadow on their assigned series prior to directing their episodes. The program has been managed and run by Liz Kelly, senior manager of Creative Talent Development & Inclusion, for the past four seasons. Last year's DGE Directing Program participants (the first year in which episodes were guaranteed) have nearly all gone on to direct and/or book their second episodes.

The DGE Directing Program has enjoyed a long track record of success. Notable alumni include Tessa Blake (“A Million Little Things”), Pete Chatmon (“black-ish”), Ryan Coogler (“Black Panther”), Zetna Fuentes (“Jane the Virgin”), Regina King (“Insecure”), Marvin Lemus (“Gentefied”), Jaffar Mahmood (“Young Sheldon”), Nzingha Stewart (“Little Fires Everywhere”) and Jude Weng (“grown-ish”). The program also merged with the former Fox Directors Lab/Fox Global Directors Initiative after Disney’s acquisition of Fox, whose notable directing alumni include Bert and Bertie (“The Great”), Marta Cunningham (“Modern Love”), Sydney Freeland (“Reservation Dogs”), Steph Green (“Watchmen”), Maggie Kiley (“Riverdale”), Alexis Ostrander (“Cruel Summer”), Marcus Stokes (“9-1-1”). Alumni from last year’s program have already gone on to book or direct their second and third episodes on shows like the Disney-produced “The Resident”; ABC’s “The Rookie,” “The Rookie: Feds” and “The Good Doctor”; Freeform’s “Good Trouble”; and The CW’s “Walker,” among other scripted series.

The 2022-23 DGE Directing Program participants’ bios:

Lilan Bowden is an actor/director most notable for her role as Bex on Disney Channel’s Television Academy Honors and GLAAD award-winning show “Andi Mack.” Acting credits also include Netflix’s series “Murderville,” “I Think You Should Leave,” “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia,” “Drunk History,” “Future Man,” “Parks and Recreation,” “Conan” and many more. She has directed commercials for VTech, children’s content for Moonbug, and recently wrapped her second comedy short, “Oh-Cha.” Her directorial debut, “Becoming Eddie,” was an Official Selection at Bentonville, Palm Springs International, CAAMFest Forward, Portland Film Festival, and is the inspiration for developing the TV series version in collaboration with Sony Pictures Entertainment. She comes from an improv comedy background and performs often in Los Angeles.

Phillip Rhys Chaudhary is an award-winning director, writer and actor based in Los Angeles. Born in London to a Ugandan-born Punjabi father and French Catholic mother, Chaudhary has over 20 years of industry experience, including as an actor on the series “24” (SAG nomination), “Dr. Who,” “Nip/Tuck,” BBC’s “Survivors” and “Shameless.” Chaudhary’s commercial and documentary directing credits include Baxter of California’s (L’Oreal Group) “Life Lived True” campaign and the documentary shorts “The Rocky,” about an eccentric Hollywood apartment manager, and “Xie, Xie, Shanghai,” which examines the chaos and the cultural confusion of making the first U.S. television show in China with Dennis Hopper. Chaudhary’s narrative short film, “The Scarecrow,” has won a plethora of awards at film festivals across the country. In 2021, he directed “Getaway Car” for the Disney Television Talent Showcase. An alumnus of the Sundance Institute and Disney TV Directing Program, Chaudhary has shadowed on numerous shows including “The Rookie” and “The Sinner” (USA). His mixed background and early exposure to different cultures strongly informs Chaudhary’s directing aesthetic and his desire to tell character-driven, inclusive stories.

Whitney Clinkscales is an LA-based Black director and producer from Upstate, New York, who crafts empowering and inspiring stories while emphasizing the beauty of inclusion and the richness of intersectionality. Having spent almost a decade in the industry, she has a wide variety of experience

in the commercial, branded, digital and promo space, both directing and producing in scripted and unscripted formats, and overseeing her projects all the way through post-production. She's helmed commercial campaigns for ABC, Cadillac, Billboard, FX, Disney+, Disney Channel and so many more. Clinkscales began her career in creative production for the Disney/ABC Digital Media Studio, where she produced digital derivative/branded content and live events, including the award-winning "Oscars: All Access." She's since worked for MTV/VH1, NBC's Digital Media Lab and Riverside Entertainment. Clinkscales has an MFA in film production with a concentration in directing and producing from Florida State University College of Motion Picture Arts. Her thesis film, "Hush," screened at several film festivals around the world and earned many awards.

Writer/Director **Shanrica Evans** received her MFA in Film/TV production from USC's School of Cinematic Arts, where she was the recipient of the prestigious James Bridges Scholarship for Directing and the Jeffery Jones screenwriting scholarship. Her short films have been screened and won awards at film festivals across the country. She is a Sundance Fellow and a Knight Grant recipient. As a fellow in the Indeed/Hillman Grad Rising Voices program, Evans' most recent short film, "Amina," premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. Her original directing content has been featured on HBO and Starz' platforms. Evans is dedicated to intimately and honestly exploring the lives of people in underrepresented communities, particularly people of color, women and members of the LGBTQIA community. She aims to bring an inventive and imaginative approach to creating complex, ethereal stories about people of color.

Ahmed Ibrahim is an Egyptian American director and filmmaker based in New York and Los Angeles. Ibrahim studied law at Alexandria University before moving to New York, where he studied film and media at NYU. Ibrahim joined the Shirin Neshat Studio in 2011, where he worked as a producer and assistant director. His short film "Noor" screened at over 30 film festivals worldwide, winning awards including Best Muhr Arab Short at the Dubai International Film Festival. His first feature film, set in Cairo and Brooklyn, received the Dubai Film Connection development award. Ibrahim has directed videos for platforms such as Visionaire Publishing and Refinery 29. He joined the assistant director's team of "Homeland" (20th Television) during season six and shadowed director Dan Attias during season seven. Ibrahim is a 2018 Ryan Murphy Television Half Foundation Directing Program Fellow and has shadowed on "Pose" (FX/20th Television) and "Welcome to Chippendales" (Hulu/20th Television).

TK Shom is a Los Angeles-based director with over 20 years of industry and crew experience, primarily as a first assistant director. He started his career working in independent film, garnering days to ultimately join the DGA, where he was one of a few assistant directors to join as a first assistant director. Shom has worked as a first assistant director on shows for Freeform, Netflix, Hulu, ABC and Comedy Central, including "Trial and Error" (NBC), "Sorry For Your Loss" (FB Watch) and "grown-ish" (Freeform). He has also worked on many features including the Duplass Brothers' "Table 19" (Searchlight) and "Paddleton" (Netflix). Shom's original short film "Sidewinder" was featured in numerous film festivals across the country in 2020. He is excited about taking the leap into episodic television directing and telling authentic stories about complex yet human, characters.

Keisha Stewart is an Emmy®-nominated costume designer in the film and television industry, who is pivoting to a career in television directing. Originally from Columbia, South Carolina, Stewart studied at Augusta College in Georgia and had a decadelong career in corporate customer service. She also supported her husband's professional basketball career, traveling the world and living in France, Germany and Israel before beginning her second career in fashion. After studying at Otis College of Art and Design, Stewart began working as a costume and wardrobe production assistant on shorts and independent films. Since then, she has worked on several television shows, gaining an Emmy nom for her work on Netflix's "Alexa and Katie." She most recently worked as costume designer for Netflix's "Family Reunion" and Disney Channel's "BUNK'D." Stewart has shadowed numerous veteran multicam television directors. As she continues her journey in the industry, her love for storytelling and directing grows.

About Disney General Entertainment Content

Disney General Entertainment Content (DGE) is a collection of renowned content brands at The Walt Disney Company creating original entertainment and news programming for the Company's streaming platforms Disney+, Hulu and Star, and its broadcast and cable networks. Its extensive brand portfolio is comprised of ABC Entertainment, ABC News, Disney Branded Television, Freeform, FX, Hulu Originals, National Geographic Content and Onyx Collective, as well as Disney Television Studios, which include 20th Television, 20th Television Animation and ABC Signature. The creative brands and studios are responsible for developing and producing some of the most popular and culture-defining shows: from long-running franchises—"9-1-1," "Atlanta," "black-ish," "Family Guy," "Grey's Anatomy," "Mickey Mouse Clubhouse," "The Simpsons," "World News Tonight," and the "American Horror Story" and "Genius" franchises—to the newest hits including "Abbott Elementary," "The Old Man" and "The Proud Family: Louder & Prouder." In 2022, DGE's programming excellence earned 226 Emmy® nominations across daytime, primetime, news and documentary categories; and Onyx Collective's "Summer of Soul (...Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)" won the Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature, their first project since launching in 2021.

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