



AUSTIN
FILM
SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING A TEXAS FILM COMMUNITY

A Message from our CEO

When reflecting on all that the Austin Film Society accomplished in 2023, a theme emerged: one of access and how, as an organization, building an inclusive community around film shows up in nearly everything we do. With that theme unifying the stories contained within these pages, I am so proud to share the contents of this annual report with you.

The first entry point into this film community is AFS Creative Careers, a unique workforce development program we launched in 2021 with support from the Economic Development Department of the City of Austin for those just starting out professionally. In 2023, the program graduated 44 participants, which contributed to an all-time graduation rate of 96%.

The Creative Careers program is run from our state-of-the-art facilities at Austin Public, which provide a plethora of resources to the local community: the latest cameras and production equipment, studio space for video and podcasting, and courses in a range of topics — from animation software to “the Art of Storytelling.” The space has a remarkable legacy, serving as the current manifestation of 50 years of public access in Austin, an anniversary we celebrated with city officials in June of 2023. And that’s just for the educational and broadcasting side of things. Those who are already working in the film industry can also find professional opportunities at the AFS-run Austin Studios, which has been home to film, TV, and other creative productions for more than 20 years, creating countless jobs in the process.

Then there are all the ways we bring Texas filmmakers into the fold. For them, we offer a pivotal funding source through the AFS Grant, which gave out \$190,000 in cash in 2023. Our grant-supported filmmakers then get opportunities to interact with AFS’s robust network of film-industry professionals through annual retreats, like the AFS Artist Intensive.

The AFS Cinema also serves as the bridge between film lovers and the world of international cinema. Our two-screen theater shows hundreds of films each year — film-festival favorites, beloved classics, and international arthouse gems — many of which include post-screening discussions with the artists who brought them to life. Where else but the AFS Cinema can you hear Ethan Hawke talk about a series of Western films starring Paul Newman?

The goal of this report is to capture all that we accomplished in 2023, but it’s also to instill a sense of pride in everyone involved in the Texas film ecosystem surrounding AFS. We’re dedicated to giving people a diverse array of resources, but it’s the creatives, the teachers, the policymakers, the philanthropists, and the activists out there that turn those resources into a community. We thank all those who supported us this year and every year — it’s a privilege to share this with you.

Rebecca Campbell
AFS CEO



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TRAINING A NEW GENERATION

AFS Creative Careers

December 12, 2023, signaled the end of a second successful year of the AFS Creative Careers workforce development program. That evening, AFS held its annual Creative Careers Capstone Celebration, a graduation ceremony for the program’s 2023 participants held at the AFS Cinema.

This night symbolized the success of the program’s many accomplishments throughout the year: the program achieved a graduation rate of 96%, and, in June, added a new hands-on class focused on teaching the roles of a production assistant on set.

There to cheer on our graduates that evening were AFS Grant-supported filmmakers, members of the AFS board, stakeholders from within city government, and guests from throughout the local film community, including PJ Raval (dir. CALL HER GANDA) who concluded the evening’s program with a keynote speech.

The Capstone event also recognized all the program participants who stuck with months of training, mentoring, and on-site job shadowing, often while balancing jobs, family, and other responsibilities. Several new graduates took to the AFS Cinema stage to talk about the close connections they made, the professional networks they developed, and the confidence they gained in the program. They also talked about how, in only a few months, they’d already found jobs in creative roles by leveraging their experience in Creative Careers.

The AFS Creative Careers program aims to support those who have been traditionally underrepresented in the film and TV industries. And as you read on, we hope you can see the impact this program has had on the lives of young Austinites so far.

ABOVE IMAGE: AFS-supported filmmaker PJ Raval gives the keynote address at the 2023 Creative Careers Capstone Celebration.

“[Creative Careers] opened my eyes that there’s this huge net of people who want to meet you and get you involved. Once I left the Creative Careers program, I felt like I had an abundance of that.”

— Noah Brown

Immersive Training Pathway, Spring 2023

“I’ve had a lot of internships, and none have been like this... this opened the door for me.”

— Andrea Cardenas

AFS Internship Pathway, Spring 2023

AFS CREATIVE CAREERS STATISTICS SINCE 2021*

87

total program participants

97%

graduation rate

72%

BIPOC participants

43%

participants who identify as women

81

jobs reported to AFS after starting the program

SXSW



ESPN

indeed

AFS CREATIVE CAREERS TRAINING INCLUDES

- TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT TRAINING
- SPECIALTY COURSES (DIRECTING, PRODUCING, ETC.)
- MENTORSHIP AND NETWORK BUILDING
- HANDS-ON JOB SHADOWING
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- CAREER COUNSELING

*Statistics are valid through December 31, 2023

ACCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Community Education

Austin Public is the creative hub of the Austin Film Society, and it's at these state-of-the-art facilities in East Austin that we were able to serve over 450 local creatives through our producer program in 2023 alone. Some opt for podcasting as their vehicle while others use our public access television channels

to share their ideas. But no matter their vision, they'll find all the training, equipment, content distribution services, and studio space they need at Austin Public along with some friendly experts to guide them along the way.

Our community education program offers an average of 18 classes per month, which, in 2023, led to over 600 attendees. This means we get to interact with many different people representing the diverse groups that make up our vibrant community. Here's what those people had to say about their experiences at Austin Public over the last year...



"I have worked in TV production studios for 20 years, and I always learn something new during the classes. Thank you for making them informative and enjoyable."

"The teacher was fantastic. He knew what he was talking about, and I felt like I was understood when I asked specific questions about use cases and how to use this gear in the real world."

"This workshop was a super session for the division of labor on a film set for efficiency, professionalism, and creativity through the lens of leadership! Loved it!"

"AFS is honestly one of the best resources in Austin. All the instructors are amazingly knowledgeable, and the classes are informative and entertaining."

50 YEARS OF PUBLIC ACCESS



Did you know that Austin Public operates the longest continuously running public access channel in the country? That's channel 10, and it represents a 50-year legacy of community television in our city, beginning in early June of 1973 with the first live cablecast from Mt. Larson.

To mark this milestone anniversary, the City of Austin declared June of 2023 to be "Austin Public Access Television Month." To celebrate, we hosted an open house at Austin Public with community leaders as well as some of the people who created all the content that has helped "keep Austin weird" for so many years.

Then, in October, we held a free screening event at the AFS Cinema called YOU'RE ON!: 50 YEARS OF PUBLIC ACCESS TV. It was an evening that celebrated the characters and content of public access in Austin, complete with on-stage appearances from special guests — like the public access founders who started it all as well as characters from programs like "The Ol Biddy Hour" — alongside plenty of clips from throughout the decades. This is what freedom of speech looks like in Austin.





ACCESS FOR ARTISTS

Artist Development

AFS Artist Development programs at AFS serve a range of needs for Texas filmmakers. Whether it's through annual invitational retreats, filmmaker showcases, or supporting amazing shorts and features through the AFS Grant, we're here to make sure Texas remains a place where filmmakers can start, build, and grow their careers.

The AFS Artist Intensive is our annual narrative-feature development program that takes place each fall. In 2023, three filmmakers were chosen to bring their scripts into a weekend of workshopping, mentoring, and even live table-reads with local actors. Lizette Barrera, Arturo R. Jiménez, and Sachin Dheeraj Mudigonda were this year's artistic fellows, many of them teachers and/or involved in AFS through various committees and educational programs. Serving as their creative advisors were Rashaad Ernesto Green (GUN HILL ROAD) and Kat Candler (HELLION) and producers Toby Halbrooks (THE GREEN KNIGHT) and Jacob Jaffke (UNCUT GEMS).

This group came together to work on the films of the three fellows and also to further grow AFS's network of filmmakers who help amplify each other's voices. Over the course of the retreat, the rising stars of Texas film worked together with the success stories of Texas film, further fostering the types of relationship that AFS's Artist Development programs were built to nurture.

ABOVE IMAGES (CLOCKWISE L TO R): Professional actors do a live table read during the 2023 Artist Intensive retreat; Artist Intensive participant Sachin Dheeraj Mudigonda; 2023 AFS Grant for Feature Films panelists (L to R) Rashaad Ernesto Green, Lisa Ogdie, and Andrew Ahn.

AFS GRANTS

FUNDING TEXAS FILMMAKERS

In 2023, AFS awarded **\$190K** to **52** projects by **53** Texas filmmakers.



BREAKING THE NEWS Premieres at Tribeca
Premiering at the 2023 Tribeca Film Festival in June was BREAKING THE NEWS, an AFS Grant-supported documentary co-directed by Heather Courtney and Chelsea Hernandez (both of whom have received AFS Grant support on other projects in the past).



BREAKING SILENCE Takes Home Awards at SXSW
A big winner at SXSW 2023 was BREAKING SILENCE, an AFS Grant-supported project that took home both the Texas Shorts Award and the Audience Award. The project was brought to life by a team of previous grant recipients including Amy Bench, Annie Silverstein, Monique Walton, and Karen Skloss.



THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY Wins at the Gotham Awards
For her performance in Morrissa Maltz' THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY — recipient of AFS Grant funding in both 2018 and 2019 — Lily Gladstone (KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON) took home the award for Outstanding Lead Performance at the Gotham Independent Film Awards.



GUIÁN Competes at Visions du Réel
Nicole Chi Amén received her first AFS Grant in 2014 and since then has worked on a variety of projects, the most recent of which, GUIÁN, received AFS Grant funding in 2021. The film screened at Switzerland's Visions du Réel nonfiction film festival in 2023, taking home a special mention in their "Burning Lights" competition for boundary-pushing filmmaking.



SING SING is Acquired at TIFF
AFS Grant-supported filmmakers Clint Bentley and Monique Walton first met in a chance encounter at the AFS-run Austin Studios after making separate films. Through that connection, the two would later team up with Greg Kwedar (a fellow AFS Grant recipient) on SING SING, which premiered at TIFF 2023 where it was acquired for distribution by A24.



WHERE MOVIE LOVERS AND MOVIE MAKERS MEET

Exhibitions

The community can come together and enjoy great films at the AFS Cinema, a space that connects Austin to global perspectives and to visiting filmmakers from around the world.

The AFS Cinema serves an average of 76,000 guests annually, all of whom could be looking for something different. Some might check out a free community screening of a PBS Indie Lens documentary followed by a panel with local experts. Others might come to hear a well-known filmmaker talk about their work, like Whit Stillman (THE LAST DAYS

OF DISCO) or Julia Ducournau (TITANE). And those who just want to lose themselves in a story can pick from a robust lineup of newly restored classics, cinema favorites, and month-long series dedicated to something or someone special in this vital visual art form.

More than just a movie theater, this is a gathering place for the film world to commune, and on the next page, you'll see some highlights from 2023 that show the magic this community can create.



ABOVE IMAGES (L TO R, TOP TO BOTTOM): New French Cinema Week featuring special guests Vincent Fontano, Rachid Hami, and Xavier Massé; actor/director Ethan Hawke; director Julia Ducournau; writer/director Whit Stillman. **OPPOSITE PAGE (L TO R):** PBS Indie Lens Pop-Up presents A TOWN CALLED VICTORIA; Pan African Film Festival leadership team; AWAAZ director Halimah Tariq.



2023 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS AT AFS CINEMA

Special Guests

ETHAN HAWKE
JULIA DUCOURNAU
WHIT STILLMAN
MORRISA MALTZ
LUKAS DHONT
ASHLEY CLARK
AL WARREN
RICK STANTON
RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT

Lates

UN HOMME QUI DORT
PORNOSTAR
GWEN, OR THE BOOK SAND
LILYA 4-EVER
DER FAN
IRREVERSIBLE
DOOM GENERATION
SPACKED OUT
MARQUIS
TOKYO POP
OLDBOY
SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY
BAXTER
NOWHERE

Additional Series

Newly Restored
Doc Nights
World Cinema Classics
Big Screen Classics
Avant Cinema

Essential Cinema

DOCUMENTARY & BEYOND:
AGNÈS VARDA
KELLY REICHARDT: THE FIRST FIVE
THE CHILDREN OF
ABRAHAM/IBRAHIM
DIETRICH/STERNBERG
THE EARLY WORKS OF
MAKOTO SHINKAI
YOU'RE MY GREATEST TREASURE:
10 EXERCISES IN INTIMACY
JEANNE MOREAU, FILMMAKER
FAST WOMEN OF THE
PRE-CODE ERA
THE DAYS BETWEEN: A BRIEF
SURVEY OF THE BERLIN SCHOOL
THE ORIGINAL INDIES:
THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN
INDEPENDENT CINEMA

Community Screenings and Partnerships

FEMME FRONTERA
FILMMAKER SHOWCASE
AWAAZ — A LIFE IN SILENCE
(CONNECTHER)
PBS INDIE-LENS
A TOWN CALLED VICTORIA
LOVE IN THE TIME OF FENTANYL
STORMING CAESARS PALACE
FREE CHOL SOO LEE

Queer Cinema:

Lost & Found
OUTRAGEOUS!
BEYOND THE VALLEY
OF THE DOLLS
MOD FUCK EXPLOSION
NITRATE KISSES
PUMPING IRON II:
THE WOMEN
TAXI ZUM KLO
HOOKERS ON DAVIE
MY DEAREST SEÑORITA
WAKEFIELD POOLE'S BIBLE!

Special Series and Festivals

NEW FRENCH CINEMA WEEK
AFS DOC DAYS
PAN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL
LOVE MONTH
SCIENCE ON SCREEN®
SPACEFLIGHT RECORDS
PRESENTS
JOHN DOE NOIR WEEKEND
CAROLYN PFEIFFER:
CHASING THE PANTHER
A WEEKEND WITH
DOLLY HALL
THE FLEISCHER STUDIOS
LEGACY



THE 2023 TEXAS FILM AWARDS

Each year, AFS invites the community to celebrate the induction of new stars into the Texas Film Hall of Fame at our signature fundraising gala, the Texas Film Awards. For over 20 years, the tradition of the Texas Film Awards has been to celebrate the luminaries of today and cultivate the film leaders of tomorrow by raising funds for AFS’s Artist Development, Exhibition, and Workforce Development programs.

In 2023, we brought the festivities out to Willie Nelson’s “Luck, Texas,” a venue with its own chapter in film history as the town-sized Old-Western film set for RED HEADED STRANGER, a movie based on Nelson’s album of the same name. We encouraged guests to show up in their best “cowboy glam” to support and celebrate Texas film, and, boy howdy, y’all were generous, contributing more than \$550,000 toward the AFS mission.



TOP IMAGES (CLOCKWISE AND L TO R): Texas Film Hall of Fame inductee Janet Pierson, writer/director Kevin Smith, and HoF inductee John Pierson at TFA 2023; HoF inductee Margo Martindale; “Luck, Texas,” site of the 2023 Texas Film Awards. **ABOVE IMAGES (L TO R):** actor/writer Luke Wilson and HoF inductee Michael De Luca; AFS Founder and Artistic Director Richard Linklater with HoF inductees Janet and John Pierson; TFA 2023 Master of Ceremonies Edi Patterson.

THE FILM INDUSTRY’S HOME IN AUSTIN

Austin Studios

In North Austin’s Mueller neighborhood, AFS runs its 20-acre film and creative media production facilities, Austin Studios. It’s here that large TV shows, film crews, and podcasts set up shop and hire local talent to produce their projects. As of 2023, the productions made here had helped bring over \$2.6 billion to the city through over 1,000 productions and created more than 36,000 jobs.

But Austin Studios’ impact reaches beyond Texas. These facilities are our connection to the film industry outside of the state, and it’s important to us that productions of all types see our region as an attractive, viable place to create content. Yes, we’re talking about

production incentives, and 2023 was a major year for the Lone Star State.

Ahead of Texas’ 88th legislative session, a large number of organizations led by the Texas Media Production Alliance (TXMPA) collaborated on lobbying to increase the amount of money set aside for the Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program (TMIIP). In May, the legislature approved \$200 million in grant funding and production incentives, which will not just create jobs and boost economies throughout the state but will have an impact on Texas productions for years to come.



FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year 2023

INCOME AND EXPENDITURES

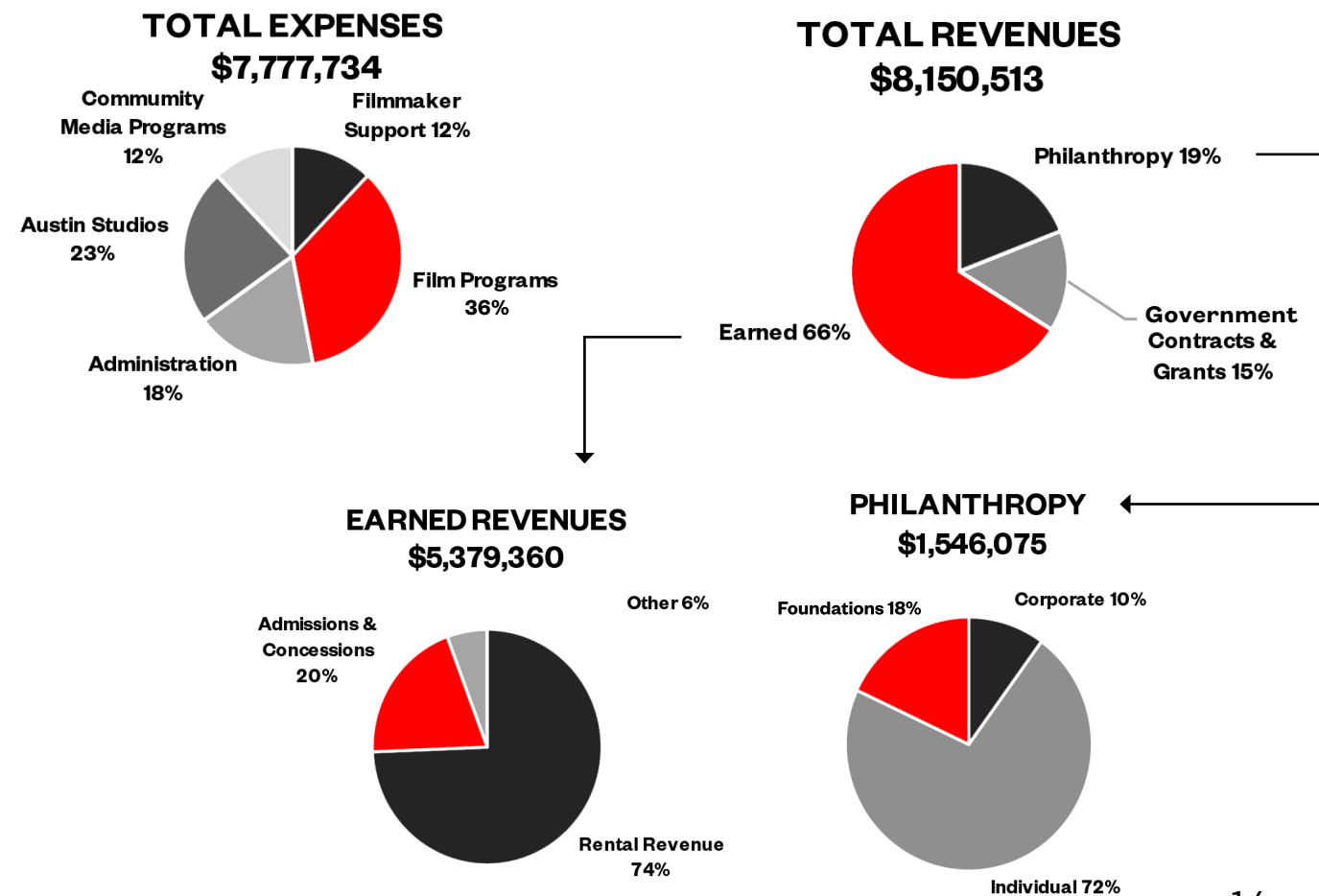
REVENUE

Rentals	\$ 3,999,924	49%
Philanthropy	\$ 1,546,075	19%
Government Contracts	\$ 1,225,078	15%
Admissions & Concessions	\$ 1,073,949	13%
Other	\$ 305,487	4%
Total	\$ 8,150,513	100%

EXPENSES

Film Programs	\$ 2,748,035	36%
Austin Studios	\$ 1,792,982	23%
Administration	\$ 1,407,445	18%
Community Media Programs	\$ 948,337	12%
Filmmaker Support	\$ 880,935	11%
Total	\$ 7,777,734	100%

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



The Austin Film Society is supported in part by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts. The Austin Film Society is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. The Austin Film Society is made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Austin Film Society has been financed in whole or in part by the City of Austin's Elevate Grant Program.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

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HARRIET AND ALBERT HILLIARD
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HUMANITIES TEXAS
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DAN STASIEWSKI
PAUL STEKLER
JAMES AND SHELBY STEPHENS
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STORYFIT
STRAY VISTA STUDIOS
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SHERRI AND TRAVIS WEST
STEPHANIE WHALLON
WHOLE FOODS
ANN AND ERIC WILSON
JOHN WILSON
MARC WINKELMAN
JESSICA WINSLOW AND STEVE SMAHA

