



2019 Colorado Dragon Film Festival presents:

**Creative Leadership Talkback / Lunch
Women in Film, Arts, Community
Festival Kickoff**

**Wednesday, February 27
1:30-3:30pm**

Zeppelin Station

3501 Wazee St.
Denver, CO 80216

Paid parking in garage on **East Side** of building

PROGRAM

1:30-2:45 PM - Panel Talkback

2:45-3:30 PM - Networking

Talkback Panelists

Britta Erickson - Denver Film Society

Erin Yoshimura - Empowerful Changes

Kathryn Gould & Trai Cartwright - WIFMCO

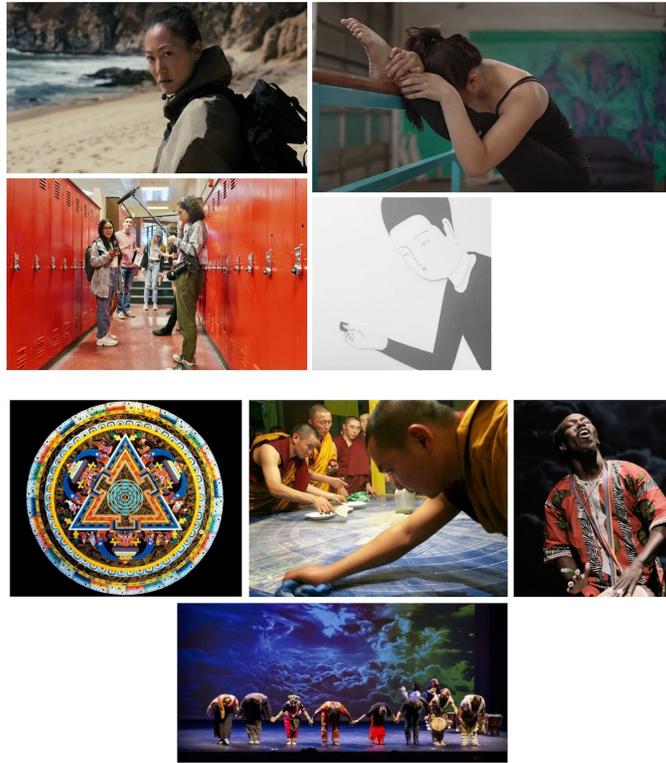
Kerry Owens - Denver Zoo

Namita Khanna Nariani & Neeti Pawar - Mudra Dance Studio

Rachel Taylor & Cheyenne Michaels - Denver Center for the Performing Arts

CO Dragon Film Fest - March 1-3

Alamo Drafthouse Sloan's Lake
4255 W. Colfax Ave. Denver, CO 80204
www.cdfilm.org



ABOUT OUR STAFF

Film Director | Lorraine Eloriaga

Executive Director | Sara Moore

Operations Manager | Tesia Chen

This year we celebrate women in film, arts, and our community! To kickoff our festival, we've invited creative leaders from Denver Film Society, Empowerful Changes, WIFMCO, Denver Zoo, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, and Mudra Dance Studio to speak to you about their work in the community! Our panelists will speak about some of the programs and projects they work on across different communities, as well what gives them their creative spark!

Audience members will have an opportunity to ask our panelists questions and stay for some networking at the end of our talks. Lunch and drinks available for purchase from one of the six tasty food stalls inside Zeppelin Station's beautiful open space.

ABOUT OUR PANELISTS

I

Britta Erickson
Denver Film Society
Festival Director

What's your morning routine?

I'm a very early riser, I feed my cats, make myself a latte and read the Denver Post (cover to cover...and yes, the print version that lands on my front steps every morning).

What do you do when you feel discouraged?

Call a friend.

Which famous artist, painter, producer, writer, filmmaker would you choose to create a work about you?

Julian Schnabel.

Place where you feel most creative or inspired?

Taos, New Mexico.

How would you like to be remembered?

I'd like to be remembered as being a compassionate listener.

II

**Erin Yoshimura
Empowerful Changes
Chief Empowerment Officer**

What's your morning routine?

Wake up, drink hot tea, try very hard not read the news, meditate or do a hypnosis audio track (not as consistent as I should be), ideate, study something (I'm a perpetual student) or read...all this in my super comfy bed.

Who/what influenced you to choose your career?

As with many Asian stories, my career started with a tragedy. After 15+ years in high tech, I got laid off and hit rock bottom.

What do you do when you feel discouraged? Best advice you've been given?

I think about my list of gratitudes and ways that I'm privileged, sometimes will do Proprioceptive Writing, and read a bunch of empowering quotes I have posted around my desk and bed. One of my favorite quotes was sent to me 15 years ago by one of my mentors: A shift is both an invitation and a challenge. A challenge to open your mind to whatever feels unfamiliar. To reevaluate whatever feels too familiar. And, to ask questions different from those everyone else is asking. I haven't been able to find it online but she told me it was an advertisement from Nissan.

III

**Kerry Owens
Denver Zoo
Certified Veterinary Technician**

Background

BA in Graphic Design, AS in Veterinary Technology, MA in Zoology Focusing on Conservation Education

What's your morning routine?

What do you do when you feel discouraged? I practice mindfulness and meditate. I read. I listen to music. I paint.

Who/what influenced you to choose your career?

Jane Goodall, a female in science who followed her dreams even when people told her she should not be a scientist and she should not move to Africa. Jane studied wild chimpanzees in Tanzania. Her findings shook the foundation of how humans defined "being human." She continues to be a passionate conservationist to this day, at the age of 84 years old.

Best advice you've been given?

What you do (and what you don't do) matters.

Place where you feel most creative or inspired?

In nature!

IV**Kathryn Gould****Women in Film and Media Colorado
Vice President / Founding President****Who/what influenced you to choose your career?**

This is a tough one to answer because I feel like my career chose me. I have simply always loved acting, writing and movies in general. Early on Star Wars was my favorite thing in the world, and I saw "A New Hope" over 100 times. I love all kinds of movies, but the things that really capture my imagination are big, inventive fantasy and scifi worlds like Star Wars, Harry Potter, and Star Trek. My ultimate career goal is to invent a world like that.

What do you do when you feel discouraged?

I try to remember how far I've come. Even though it's taken me much longer to get where I am than I wanted it to take, I look back at where I was 10 years ago and it's such a big difference. I also try to focus on what I'm good at and to remember that it's discipline and hard work that have gotten me this far, and that's what it will take to get even further. And I also try to look at the big picture. Someone once said that the shortest distance between truth and a human being is a story. We tell stories in order to connect ourselves and our fellow humans to essential truths about life, love and humanity. This is a sacred calling and a humbling and blessed endeavor to be a part of.

Best advice you've been given?

"A screenplay is never finished... only abandoned." I'm not sure who said it, but it helps me remember that a screenplay is not a finished product. I make it as good as I can, but eventually I have to turn it over to a whole team of people who will add their vision to it before it can become a finished film. My mind to the page is just the first step in a long journey.

Favorite project you've worked on so far?

Well if I have to choose, I guess I'd say it's a scifi script for a German director that we will be

pitching this spring in LA. Even though it wasn't my original idea, I think it's my favorite so far because it helped me prove to myself that I can work at a professional level, completing a great script that the director is really happy with and people are excited to make.

How would you like to be remembered?

As someone who conquered her fears and got s*** done.

V

**Trai Cartwright
Women in Film and Media Colorado
President**

**Western State Colorado University
Screenwriting Professor**

**Craftwrite
Editor and Story Consultant**

**Sundown Road, Hidden Tigers, Secret
Ellington
Writer and Producer**

Background

CU Denver, DU Creative Writing Program MA, Western State Colorado University - MFA /
Screenwriting Professor

What do you do when you feel discouraged?

I try to remember that the only way to fail in this or any endeavor is to quit. And if that doesn't work, I go out with friends. And drink.

Have you created or worked on something that you didn't like very much, but that the public loved?

Lost in Space. Total junk movie, back in the 1998. We gave notes to improve it. We were ignored – small production company vs. New Line Cinema's boy's club. They weren't going to listen to us. But I learned a ton. And people seem to like it.

Best advice you've been given?

This isn't finding the cure of cancer. There is no reason to be a jerk or let it make you crazy -- Try to remember to have a good time, and if you can, only work with nice people.

Which famous artist, painter, producer, writer, filmmaker would you choose to create a work about you?

I just did: I wrote a screenplay about Duke Ellington called Secret Ellington, for a local producer. It's about this year in the life of the world's most famous composer, when he was at rock bottom in his career—he disappeared for most of 1954, and when he came back, he was completely revitalized, writing innovative music, and worked every day until he died. We imagined what exactly happened during that year to change his whole life.

Favorite project you've worked on so far?

Leonardo DiCaprio's International Short Film Festival. I was the Assistant Director, and there was no Director, so I did everything. It was all brand new, this online entertainment / internet thing, and I had landed the job because he only interviewed and hired family, friends, and friends of friends, and I landed in that last category. I got to learn a nascent industry, I got to road map 3 years worth of the festival, I got to run the festival itself, I got to go to amazing parties – this was a culmination of all my biz dev training in LA, all my storytelling and filmmaking skills and love of finding new talent – it was all put into play, and getting to work in what I KNEW was the future... I was gonna be rich and famous and HAPPY! I even got to go pitch the whole thing to Atom Films up in Seattle...which ended up being me pitching them something that they bought rather than partnered with, so I sold myself out on that trip and lost my job. The fest was live for maybe 2 years. They used a lot of my ideas. But ultimately the tech wasn't there yet (20 minutes to download a 2 minute film!), so it was okay I got booted. Except for the part where I didn't get paid for making Leo \$2 million. I mean, it was his name they were buying, but it was my product that they put in their storefront.

Last thing you learned from work?

Hire the right people. You get one of these occasionally, a show that just goes like butter. Sundown Road had exactly 3 weeks to execute and the script wasn't locked. I hired Gregg and Tammy Stouffer as co-direct and editor, and UPM respectively, then I hired Grant Wordson, a former CFS student of mine, to AD. They were amazing, just nailed every detail in the most professional, expedient way. Grant was responsible for hiring most of the crew, and I told him inclusion was very important to me. He brought in 50% women, and some were CFS students, so they got great opportunities. I was in charge of casting, and we had one week but casting was so easy – a very small net was thrown and we still found such great talent, and they really really delivered. Then, after hiring the right people – which yes, were people I knew who I respected and knew kicked ass, so networking, folks, it's a real thing! – the next lesson is knowing when to stay out of the way. There were lots of small things I would have liked to have tweaked, but the ship had sailed. At some point my job was to support -- not try to perfect story, or adjust camera shots, or whatever I myself would have done differently. A producer at some point really has to just support what the people she hired want to do.

VI

Namita Khanna Nariani
Mudra Dance Studio
Artistic Director

What's your morning routine?

Wake up, hang out with my doggies. Nell (14-year-old Terrier) and Gia (5-year-old Beagle), make spicy chai for Sanjiv (husband), and some hot green tea for me. Catch up on my emails and any new work (architecture). Then music time for our new production and choreography.

Who/what influenced you to choose your career?

Passion is DANCE! Felt like I was born to do so. Career is ARCHITECTURE: the perfect blend of art and science. The beauty is to harmonize my passion with the flavor of my career.

What do you do when you feel discouraged?

Talk to my husband, and our loves, Eishita (26) and Ninaad (20). And yes... DANCE!!!! Dance always makes the negative go away and envelopes my soul with light, positivity and happiness. The human connection to me replaces all discouragement with encouragement.

Best advice you've been given?

Don't ever change your vision. Create through your true passion, and the world will follow.

Which famous artist, painter, producer, writer, filmmaker would you choose to create a work about you?

Well, I wish she was alive: FRIDA. But now, my daughters and dancers, who know me best, and my favorite artist alive, Sushma.

Favorite project you've worked on so far?

Definitely GYAAN... TRUTH THROUGH KNOWLEDGE! A dance drama exploring senseless loss. Really made me reflect on all the negatives and how to create positives through that journey. Tackled topics that are always brushed under the rug.

Go-to karaoke song?

All the Single Ladies

How would you like to be remembered?

A person who loved the world.

VII**Rachel Taylor****Denver Center for the Performing Arts****Teaching Artist, Program Manager - Literacy Engagement and Resiliency****Favorite project you've worked on so far?**

I am the lucky lady that gets to work with several groups from the Denver community who are all living with challenges, ranging from brain trauma to MS. They come to theater class on a weekly basis and are a constant source of inspiration and awesome examples of how the arts can be truly transformative. They are my favorite ongoing project.

Who/what influenced you to choose your career?

My mother was a Librarian and introduced me to all the real and imagined adventures that books can take you on. My father was a public school teacher for almost 45 years and my older sister was a ballerina. I like to think that theater education is a conglomeration of all three of their influences.

What do you do when you feel discouraged?

I remind myself that no matter how discouraging the day or how the finances are, that I am truly fortunate to get to do what I do.

Go-to karaoke song?

Pat Benatar Shadows of the Night

VIII
Cheyenne Michaels
Denver Center for the Performing Arts
Marketing Associate

Who/what influenced you to choose your career?

I have always been a big ol' theatre nerd, since I was little. I would write plays with my aunt and uncle and perform them in the living room for my mom (my best one was about Captain Carrot, a pirate that was, you guessed it, a carrot). I always knew I didn't want to pursue acting as a career because I couldn't stand the uncertainty that comes with it, but part way through college, I realized I could use my skills as a marketer to convince others to come to the theatre, a cause I find most noble.

Best advice you've been given?

It's not so much advice as it is a mantra: "I am enough."

Go-to karaoke song?

"I Want to Dance with Somebody" by Whitney Houston.

COLOSSAL THANK YOU

Zeppelin Station Staff: Annie Montgomery, Justin Anderson, Nikki Smith

Food Stall Vendors: Brian Gharring / Icelandic pop-up Skál, Au Feu, Injoi Korean Kitchen, OK Poke, Yen Huynh / Vinh Xuong Bakery, Duc Huynh / Dandy Lion Coffee, and Gelato Boy!

ZEPPELIN

S T A T I O N

CO Dragon Film Fest - March 1-3

Alamo Drafthouse Sloan's Lake
4255 W. Colfax Ave. Denver, CO 80204

www.cdfilm.org

www.facebook.com/cdfilmfest

The **Colorado Dragon Film Festival** is organized by **501(c)3 non-profit organization Dragon 5280**. CDFFF highlights and promotes the culture, contributions, and accomplishments of Asian Pacific American communities through film.