



**THE ISLAMIC SCHOLARSHIP FUND LAUNCHES
MUSLIM CENTERED WRITERS' LAB TO UPLIFT AMERICAN MUSLIM NARRATIVE**

*Inaugural Writers' Lab, a Feature Film Program, is Supported by
The Black List and Extracurricular – Nov 11-13, 2022*

Berkeley, CA – October 3, 2022 – The Islamic Scholarship Fund (ISF) is proud to announce its inaugural Muslim Centered Writers' Lab taking place from November 11-13, 2022. Made possible with support from Extracurricular and The Black List, the Writers' Lab aims to uplift the American Muslim narrative by elevating opportunities for Muslim screenwriters to be at the center of their stories.

"The correlation between public perception and Muslim representation within film and television is undeniable," said Executive Director Somayeh Nikooei. "Media representation is integral to helping reduce stereotypes and marginalization that so many communities face. Specifically for American Muslim youth, it offers them the chance to see themselves and their community on the big screen in a nuanced and empowering light."

This feature film program was designed by Muslim filmmakers to create a cycle of support that centers the fellows' artistic vision. The three-day lab will offer workshops that will guide participants from script through pitch. Following the writing intensive, fellows will continue with mentorship support as they prepare for meetings with industry leaders and decision makers. The fellows will receive \$5,000 towards their project's advancement and lab participation.

"Since 2009, ISF created the first American Muslim Film Scholarship program and Film Grant to reframe the narrative of Muslim stories and support Muslim filmmakers," said Film Programs Director Iman Zawahry. "Since then, we have awarded over \$365,000 to over 84 Muslim filmmakers. We knew that elevating impact would mean growing our programs and adding artist support and development through mentorship, networking, and community engagement. The lab came at a critical time for ISF's evolution when our Film Council members, Minhal Baig and Assia Boundou, encouraged us to host the program. They felt ISF would be the right home as an organization that is both Muslim artists and alumni led."

"All of our artist support programs are co-created with film alumni, which give us the opportunity to develop programming that supports their journey as a whole," said Artist Support Manager Shireen Alihaji. "We reflected on what Muslim-centered programming could feel like and developed an evolving framework that creates space for Muslim artists to restore, define, and center their narratives."

The cohort includes six fellows with feature scripts that reflect intersectional Muslim narratives:

Arranged // Mithra B. Alavi

It's her thirty-fourth birthday and Rayhaneh fully expects her boyfriend of two years to propose. When he breaks up with her instead, she panics at the slow destruction of her biological clock.



She does the only thing she can do — gets shit-faced drunk and calls her Iranian father to set her up with an eligible Iranian bachelor.

At-Risk // Maria Warith-Wade

After discovering the unexpected death of her father, a young college student catapults into adulthood and heavily weighs staying home to care for her family or returning to college.

Quarters // Aiman Mimiko

Martin fights to instill love for his country in his daughter when a military coup leaves them unable to leave Nigeria for the life-altering surgery she desperately needs.

Queen of Diamonds // Mahnoor Euceph

Recently dumped by Prince James, the heir to the British throne, Pakistani-American, Pakiza, convinces her South Asian booksmart best friends to pull off the ultimate revenge heist: steal the looted Koh-i-Noor diamond at her ex's Royal Wedding.

The Last Day of Ramadan // Anna Khan

Muslim doctor Fida must contend with her estranged family, secret non-Muslim boyfriend, and an increasingly hungry stomach when she gets stuck in a time loop of the last day of Ramadan.

The Scar // Marwan Mokbel

A brash twelve-year-old boy is marked by an evil entity that has haunted his village for years, sentencing him to die in three days' time. As the village mourns his impending death, the boy races to vanquish the entity, only to discover that he's more connected to it than he imagined.

Honorable mentions include Aizzah Fatima (Stuck in Between), Asad Farooqui (Boundaries), Faroukh Virani (Fossils), Khaula Malik (Sutoon), Malik Aziz (Midnight in Kansas) and Sarah Chang Tadayon (The Dragon Emperor's Daughter).

The six fellows will receive mentorship from Andrew Ahn (Fire Island, Driveways), Carlos López Estrada (Blindspotting, Summertime), David Rabinowitz (BlackKlansman), Josh Feldman (This Close, Marvel series Echo), Kelly Marie Tran (Raya and the Last Dragon, Star Wars: Episode VIII: The Last Jedi), and Tanuj Chopra (Delhi Crime 2, Punching the Sun). The programming and education team is joined by Q. Terah Jackson, Erika Kennair and Karim Ahmad.

For more information or to get into contact with fellows, please visit:

<https://islamicscholarshipfund.org/writers-lab/>

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About The Islamic Scholarship Fund

The Islamic Scholarship Fund's mission is to increase American Muslim representation in media and government to improve public policy and opinion. ISF offers scholarships, mentorships, internship and fellowships in four verticals, public policy, public interest law, journalism and film.

Media Contact:

Vijay Lalwani : vijay@thekokigroup.com