

*strategy. story. impact.*

**CINEREACH**



# WE KNOW STORY.

For almost two decades, Cinereach has been successful in both creating beloved, impactful films and supporting filmmakers around the world at the highest artistic level. We have carved out a distinctive, and award-winning niche in the entertainment industry with a commitment to film that blends the art of story with the pursuit of impact, becoming a touchstone for filmmakers who seek both creative freedom and social resonance.

Today, we have expanded our focus and are on a path of exploration. Foundational to our approach is the knowledge that too many of the stories being made today that strive for social impact struggle to connect with broader audiences. While beautiful stories are individually created, there is a lack of connection to larger systems where momentum can build and culture is primed to shift. We understand the gap between stories that aspire for social change and popular entertainment that resonates with the masses.

**OUR PROCESS IS DESIGNED TO  
CREATE STORIES TO FILL THAT GAP.**

*Clockwise from top left:  
Beasts of the Southern  
Wild, Marcel the Shell  
with Shoes On, The  
Assistant, Sorry To  
Bother You*



# STRATEGY



# STORY



# IMPACT



We know that stories shape perceptions, and perceptions shape realities. With Cinereach, we aim to redefine storytelling to sculpt a better, more inclusive future. Whether you're a creator, researcher, investor, or change-maker, Cinereach offers a platform where narratives come alive and resonate deeply.

**MISSION** To revolutionize impact storytelling by weaving narrative change with popular entertainment, harnessing the transformative power of story to inspire curiosity, agency, and empathy.

**VISION** To contribute to a more equitable, regenerative and resilient society through story.

## WHAT IS CINEREACH'S ROLE?

- We are a multimedia story development and production lab bridging the divide between social impact storytelling and popular entertainment.
- Beyond any one story or issue, we aspire to revolutionize the narrative process, improving how stories are made and understood.
- We aspire to create a “domino effect” that puts the power of story to work with others in the ecosystem, building momentum toward greater impact.



*here's how we do it*

# THE CINEREACH APPROACH

## WE DO OUR HOMEWORK

We start with a broad exploration of a topic, then dive into the nitty gritty through **lived experience and expert insights**.

## WE GET CREATIVE

A rich understanding of the problems and systems at play **supercharges the vision of storytellers**, bringing us to surprising and unexpected creative places.

## WE DON'T ASSUME, WE CHECK

At every step, we use social science and analysis to check our ideas and assumptions, avoiding tropes and traps to deliver **entertainment primed for impact**.

## WE MAKE THINGS

Then, and most critically, **we fund and make pioneering pilots and prototypes** to bring these stories into the world.

**THERE IS  
NO CHANGE  
WITHOUT  
CULTURAL  
CHANGE**

**AND CULTURE  
IS CHANGED**

**THROUGH  
STORY.**



# STORIES PERSUADE IN WAYS MERE FACTS AND LOGIC CAN'T

Stories have an incredible power. They spark our imagination to new possibilities without limit, give us new ways of seeing the world, and allow us to connect with the inner lives and experiences of others at the deepest levels.

**Storytelling can literally rewire our brains and reshape memories.** Authentic, well-crafted stories have the power to change how people think and feel. Stories are how we make sense of the world around us.

At Cinereach, our work is directed by the key insight that it is essential to invest in the artists, storytellers and other cultural leaders, and the strategies that activate them, as catalysts for change.

## STORIES RESHAPE THE WORLD



### RELATABLY DIFFERENT

Popular sitcoms help reframe contentious issues through relatable characters who can shift audiences' beliefs. For example, a 2012 *Hollywood Reporter* poll found that 27 percent of likely voters said that depictions of gay characters on TV, like the ones in *Modern Family*, made them more pro-gay marriage.



### THE SCULLY EFFECT

The *X-Files* character FBI agent Dana Scully had a measurable positive impact on the number of women in STEM during its run and for years afterwards, according to research done by Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media.



### GAME AS GATEWAY

The widely popular video game *Life is Strange* has been praised for its empathetic and authentic portrayal of themes of depression and suicide. Schools and mental health organizations have used the game as a tool to discuss these topics with young people, demonstrating the game's reach and impact beyond the gaming community.



Clockwise from top left:  
*After Yang*, *The Florida Project*, *Shirkers*, *I Am Not Your Negro*

*where we started*

# OUR HISTORY OF GREAT STORIES

Cinereach was founded in 2006 on a simple yet challenging mission to support **vital, artful films**.

In that time, we have built a reputation for artistic excellence, supporting more than 200 works from bold, visionary filmmakers around the world, winning acclaim and awards along the way.

Over our history, Cinereach has demonstrated an eye for talent, identifying great stories and emerging artists long before they become award winners and industry leaders.

## SOME OF THE ARTISTS WE WORK WITH

Sean Baker • Effie Brown • Sandi Tan  
Damien Chazelle • Ryan Coogler  
Robert Eggers • Kitty Green  
Marielle Heller • Eliza Hittman  
Barry Jenkins • Kogonada • Raoul Peck  
Laura Poitras • Dee Rees  
Kelly Reichardt • Boots Riley  
Roger Ross Williams • Chloé Zhao

## A FEW OF THE FILMS WE'VE SUPPORTED

Reality • Marcel The Shell With Shoes On • After Yang • The Assistant • The Last Black Man in San Francisco  
Sorry To Bother You • The Florida Project • I Am Not Your Negro  
Whiplash • Fruitvale Station • Beasts of the Southern Wild • Shirkers • Never Rarely Sometimes Always

Though we've expanded our focus from artful films to a broader range of popular entertainment—including everything from film and television to graphic novels and video games—we remain fully committed to crafting **powerful stories in collaboration with great storytellers**.

## AWARDS & SUCCESSES

23

Filmmaker Fellows

23

Producer Awardees

200

Over 200 Film Grants

25

Over 25 Independent Spirit Award Nominations

40

Over 40 Gotham Award nominations

7

7 Academy Award Nominees

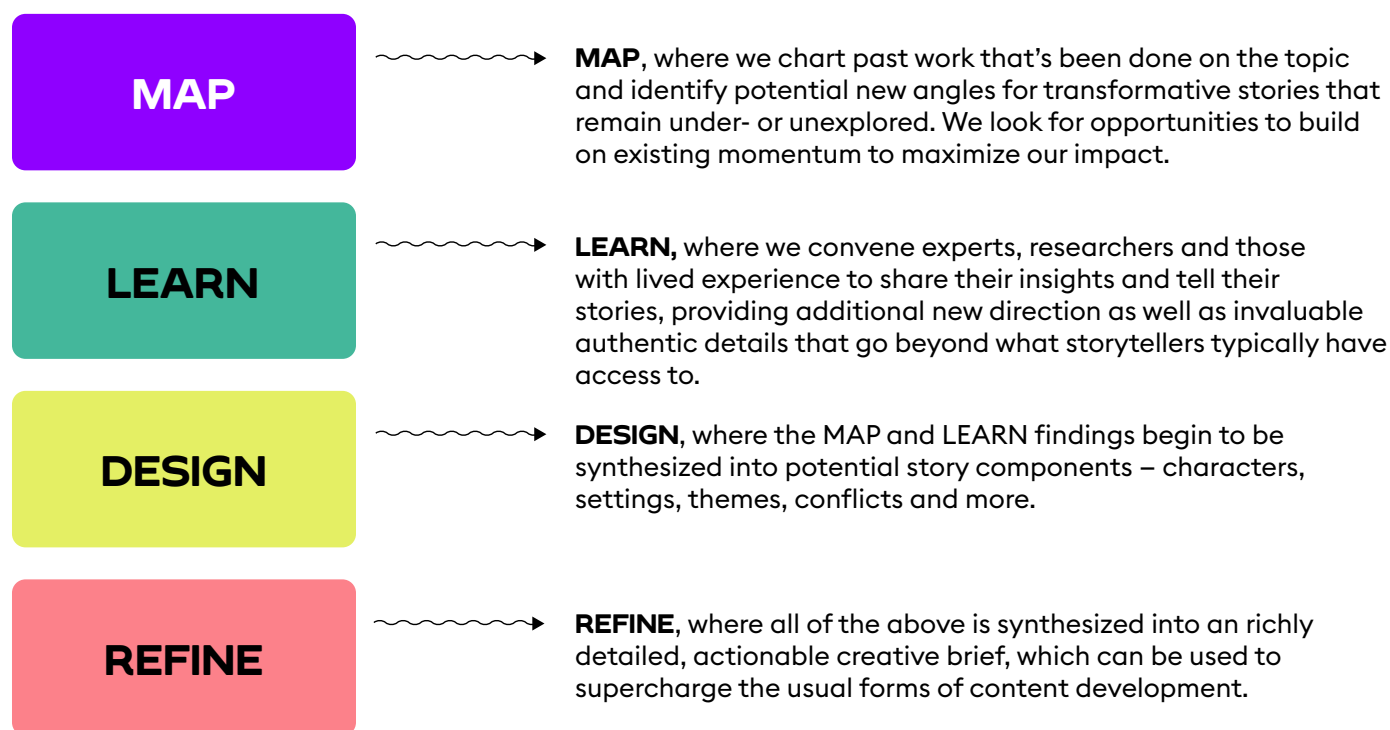
20

Over 20 Sundance Wins

let's go for a SWIM...

# OUR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

What makes Cinereach's development process so different? It all starts with our proprietary **Strategy-informed Workshop Incubation Model (SWIM)**, which allows us to take on a topic, like *environmental sustainability* or *economic justice* and map out everything around it – from which audiences hold what core beliefs to who are the communities involved and what are their lived experiences.



**SWIM IS NOT A FOCUS GROUP.  
IT'S NOT A BRAINSTORMING SESSION,  
OR A WRITERS' ROOM.**

Rather, SWIM provides a rich, authentic vehicle to engage with a topic before the creative work is even done, in order to consider a path forward that can succeed on all levels – artistically, commercially and, most importantly, **in its ability to have an impact on the culture at large.**



*what we're up to*

# CURRENT PROJECTS

Our **unique approach to content development** starts with going deep, really deep, into understanding issues, ecosystems and audiences.

From there, themes and intervention points – opportunities to expand or shift the conversation – emerge to point us and our creative collaborators towards the kinds of characters and stories that can achieve impact at scale.

Here's a look at just a few of the many projects we're focused on right now.

## A FEW OF OUR PAST AND CURRENT COLLABORATORS



## CURRENT PROJECTS

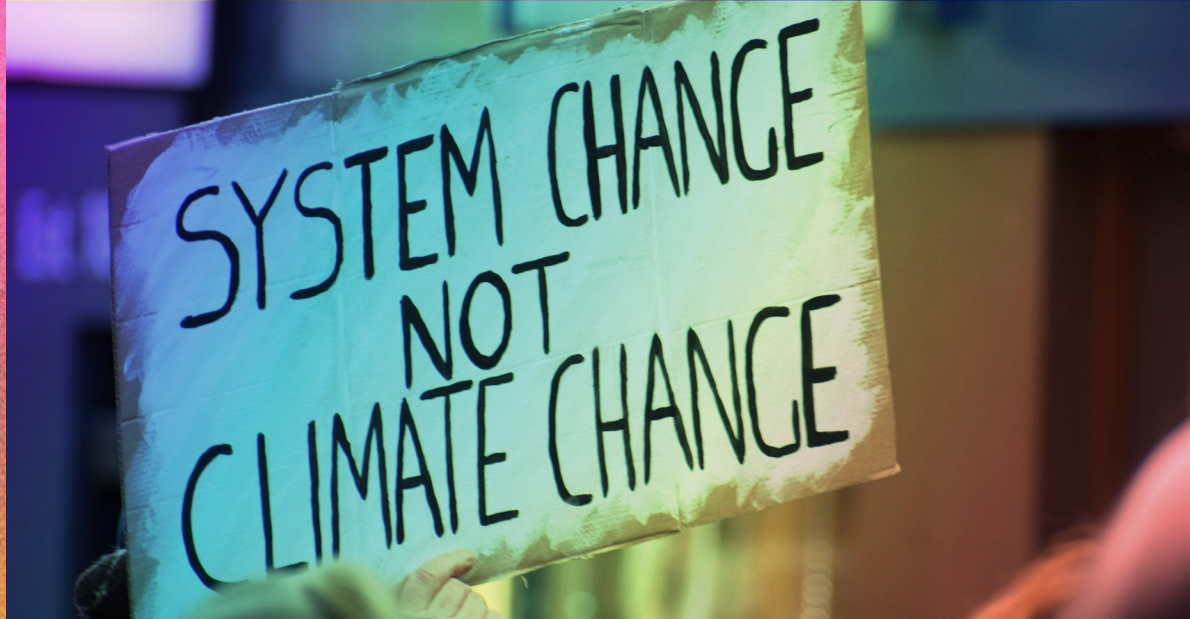
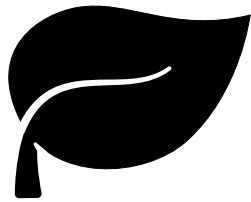


Photo by Ma Ti  
for Unsplash



## CLIMATE VISIBILITY PROJECT

The depiction of **climate change in popular culture** too often lands at one of two extremes: absence, there's no man-made problem, so nothing we should do – or disaster, the problem is too big to fix, so there's nothing we can do.

Cinereach is engaging in a deeper study of how story can help move audiences towards greater understanding of climate change—and then undertaking the work to develop those insights into more accurate climate representations within entertainment to **give viewers greater agency**.

*in partnership with*

**GOOD  
ENERGY**

### THE DETAILS

- Uncovering which narratives, formats and media are most likely to reach and engage key audiences, as a precursor to content development and production.
- Identifying the role story and narrative has played—or could potentially play—in the overall climate movement

## CURRENT PROJECTS



WINNERS ANNOUNCED  
AT OFFICIAL EVENT

**SXSW.** ↙  
**2024**

JUST PLAY is an online competition and showcase challenging video game developers to engage in creative ways with **themes of justice through gameplay mechanics and story.**

We are excited to pair the gaming community with themes that emerged from our research which revealed that our relationship to justice (or injustice) has a much greater impact on our understanding than mere passive engagement with the topic. By enabling players to **explore systems of justice interactively through gaming,** we can open minds and inspire new perspectives.

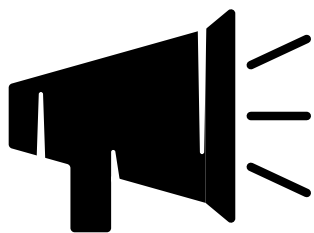
*in collaboration with*



### THE DETAILS

- Global competition to run in December 2023 to early January 2024
- Toolkit provided to entrants to enrich creators' understanding of various forms of justice.
- Finalists and winners announced live at an official event at SXSW in March 2024.
- An invitation to Cinereach workshops and additional development support may be provided to select finalist projects

## CURRENT PROJECTS



## NARRATIVES OF LEADERSHIP

Why do so many stories in popular culture feature evil or incompetent government officials? Our NARRATIVES OF CIVIC LEADERSHIP project explores how new stories of people making a difference in places of power can **inspire greater civic engagement**—especially among audiences under 30.

### THE DETAILS

- Completed two cycles of workshops focused on uncovering the most essential and urgent narratives around civic leadership and engagement
- Utilized research findings to create dynamic, narrative tools and resources for creators to use in content development
- In development on two projects: an 8-part, social media episodic series engaging social media influencers and young civic leaders; a television procedural aimed at the 40+ audience designed to encourage their support of the under 30 generation of leaders

*Below, from left to right: Madame Secretary (CBS Television Studios), Abbott Elementary (Warner Brothers Television and 20<sup>th</sup> Television)*

*in collaboration with*



Clockwise from top:  
*Tuesday, Mustache, Reality*



# ADDITIONAL FINANCED PROJECTS

In addition to projects that originate in our SWIM model and workshops, we support a small portfolio of select outside projects that align with our core mission. These Program Related Investments are a way for Cinereach to provide direct, sustainable financial support for films and other works that inspire audiences to help build a more equitable, regenerative, and resilient society.

## RECENT FINANCED FILMS

### REALITY

*starring Sydney Sweeney, directed by Tina Satter, released by HBO Max*

With all dialogue taken from the official FBI transcript, *Reality* tells the tense, mesmerizing story of what transpired inside whistleblower Reality Winner's home the day of her arrest. *Reality* examines truth, power and the U.S. legal system through the lens of one intimate, disconcerting and very real encounter.

- Official Selection, Berlin International Film Festival 2023
- Best Feature nominee, Gotham Awards 2023
- Based on the award-winning stage play, *Is This a Room*

### TUESDAY

*starring Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Lola Petticrew, directed by Daina O. Pusić, produced by A24 and BBC Film*

A mother and her teenage daughter must confront Death when it arrives in the form of an astonishing talking bird. The debut feature from award-winning writer/director Daina O. Pusić, *Tuesday* is a heartrending tale about the echoes of loss and finding resilience in the unexpected.

- Official Selection, Telluride Film Festival 2023
- Official Selection, BFI London Film Festival 2023

### MUSTACHE

*starring Atharva Verma and Alicia Silverstone, directed by Imran J. Khan*

Yanked out of his Islamic private school and thrown into public school for the first time, 13-year-old Pakistani-American Ilyas is facing a major crisis – made worse by his insecurities of his inescapable, prepubescent mustache. Ilyas' adolescent fears and pressure from his Islamic family might be problems specific to him – but speak to the universality of the emotions he experiences.

- Official Selection, SXSW 2023
- SXSW Narrative Feature Audience Award Winner 2023



# WHY PARTNER WITH CINEREACH

## **A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS**

Cinereach has a rich history in the entertainment industry, resulting in key relationships that have propelled us forward quickly.

## **WE FUND IDEAS**

We don't just have insights and theories. We have the resources to develop our ideas into producible pitches and prototypes, and the skills and experience to produce them.

## **THE DOMINO EFFECT**

Through our growing list of projects and partners, we aim to build the kind of momentum that no single story can achieve alone. We can create a "domino effect" that puts the power of story to work with others in the ecosystem, allowing the story to do its necessary part to set the stage for change, taking on seemingly insurmountable issues collectively.

## **NOT JUST FILMS, BUT ALL MEDIA**

Our focus is not limited to films; we explore all media forms to craft impactful stories.

## **COOL PROJECTS**

We have exciting projects in development, and **we want you to be a part of this journey.**

# CINEREACH

Join us and be part of a movement that is reshaping how stories are made and received, working together to build a more connected and impactful storytelling ecosystem.

## GET IN TOUCH

**JENNIFER  
STRACHAN**

Chief Executive  
Officer

[jennifer@cinereach.org](mailto:jennifer@cinereach.org)

**MARY  
DUNAWAY**

Chief Philanthropy  
Officer

[mary@cinereach.org](mailto:mary@cinereach.org)

**CANDICE  
MCFARLANE**

Chief Creative  
Officer

[candice@cinereach.org](mailto:candice@cinereach.org)

**TERRY CHANG**

Chief Legal Officer,  
Head of Business  
Development

[terry@cinereach.org](mailto:terry@cinereach.org)

