

RACHEL LAUREN MUELLER

DOCUMENTARY DIRECTOR, JOURNALIST
CINEMATOGRAPHER

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Minneapolis, Minnesota (Dakota & Ojibwe Territory)

Filmography of Directed Works

2026 They're Here 24 min. documentary short

Director, Producer, D.P – co-directed with Laura Poitras

A real-life horror film chronicling ICE's reign of terror in Minneapolis. Using dash cam footage, counter-surveillance and original behind-the-scenes footage, the film follows the city's residents and their acts of solidarity and resistance.

- Venice Film Festival - World Premiere (2026)

2024 Kingmaking

47 min. commissioned documentary

Director

Al Jazeera Arabic - broadcast

"President Industry" is an eye-opening exploration of the interplay between politics, capitalism and primal societal values in U.S. presidential campaigning strategy.

- WINNER (Bronze), Best Documentary (40+ min.), 2025 Telly Awards

2022 8 Days at Ware

26 min. documentary short

Co-director, D.P. Co-editor

PBS Reel South - broadcast

Suicides at a juvenile detention center in Louisiana raise troubling questions about the facility and the agencies tasked with overseeing it – exposing a legacy of abuse going back decades.

- WINNER, Best Documentary Short, Wyoming International Film Festival (2023)
- Official Selection, Mammoth Lakes Film Festival (Mammoth, CA, 2023)
- Honorable Mention, Excellence in Coverage of Trauma - The Dart Center (2023)
- Finalist, Livingston Award (2023)
- Official Selection, Double Exposure Film Festival (Washington D.C., 2022)
- IF/Then Distribution Fellowship (2022)
- WINNER, Reva and David Logan Prize for Investigative Reporting (2020)
- Berkeley FILM Foundation Grant (2020)

2019 Witches Rising

7 min. documentary short

Director, Producer, D.P., Editor

Two female witches share their journeys finding empowerment and belonging in witchcraft traditions that give them autonomy and control.

- FilmNorth's Cinema Lounge (St. Paul, 2022)
- Connect Media Festival (St. Paul, 2021)

Works-in-Progress

The Quiet Part documentary feature
Director, D.P.

The arrival of a white supremacist pagan church ignites a struggle for the soul of a town, offering disturbing warnings about the normalization of extremism. **Estimated premiere Spring 2027**

Supported by:

- WINNER - Zeitgeist Film Festival Pitch (2026)
- WINNER - Working Films Impact Award, Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights, Geneva (2026)
- FINALIST - Sundance Documentary Fund (2025)
- Film Independent Fast Track Fellowship (2025)
- JustFilms - Ford Foundation (2025)
- Big Sky Festival Pitch (2025)
- Raymond J. Christensen Foundation (2025)
- Miller/Packan Fund - Rogovy Foundation (2024)
- DOKLeipzig Co-Production Market (2023)
- Pare Lorentz Grant - International Documentary Association (2021)
- Minnesota State Arts Board - Individual Artist Grant (2021)
- Metropolitan Regional Arts Council Grant (2021)

The Fire This Time Was in the Aisles experimental documentary short
Director

A meditation on fire, uprising, and the cycles of destruction and renewal, centered on the 2020 racial uprisings in Minneapolis following the murder of George Floyd. **Estimated premiere Spring 2027**

Flesh of Humans, Flesh of Angels 20 min. documentary short
Director, D.P., Editor

When a queer woman struggles to accept the Catholic church's rejection of her, she takes the sacraments' rituals into her own hands as an act of rebellion.

- MN State Art's Board Grant (2024)

Money Unusual commissioned documentary short
Director, Editor

Millennials are set to inherit the largest generational shift in assets in American history. This short documentary follows young people with wealth privilege who are working to do something unusual with their money – give it all away. **Estimated premiere Fall 2026**

Other Relevant Experience

2026	Artist Talk: "Minnesota Field Report: Centering Community Amid Authoritarian Chaos" - Based On a True Story - True/False Film Festival
2025 - present	Member, Documentary Cinematographers Alliance
2024 - present	Co-Lead and Founder, Minneapolis chapter of The Video Consortium
2025	Juror, Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival - Short documentaries
2024, 2025	Host, The Flaherty Seminar - Minneapolis/St. Paul pod screening
2024, 2025	Artist Talk: "Doc Cinematography" - St. Paul Neighborhood Network
2023	Juror, IDA Documentary Awards - Multi-part documentary series
2022 - present	Director of Photography - Twin Cities PBS
2022	Artist Talk: "One Story, Two Mediums" - Double Exposure Film Festival

Awards // Fellowships

2026	Working Films Impact Award - The Quiet Part
2025	Film Independent Fellowship, Fast Track - The Quiet Part
2021	UnionDocs Summer Documentary Lab - The Quiet Part
2019	Overseas Press Club Fellowship
2019	GroundTruth Film Fellowship

Leadership and Facilitation	2025 - present	Member, Documentary Cinematographers Alliance
	2024 - present	Co-Lead and Founder, Minneapolis chapter of The Video Consortium
	2017, 2020	Facilitator, Beyond Policing Curriculum
	2011	Co-Lead, East African Circle; Jane Addams School for Democracy

Publications	2022	<u>"Dying Inside' Chaos and Cruelty in Louisiana Juvenile Detention" - The New York Times</u> Finalist, The Livingston Award Honorable Mention, The Dart Center Award
	2019	<u>"Family Planning to Combat Climate Change in Sahel" - Yale Climate Connections</u>
	2017	<u>"Enough is Enough: a 150-year performance review of the Minneapolis Police Department" - community storytelling project</u>
	2016 - 2018	"Green Card Youth Voices" Immigrant Book Series; Mpls, St. Paul, Fargo • Best Multicultural Nonfiction, Moonbeam Children's Book Awards • Finalist, Midwest Independent Publishers Awards
	2016	"The Worst Lover: Boyfriend Spirits in Senegal" - Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology; Reprinted in 2022 • Nancy Schwartz Essay Award, Association of Africanist Anthropology

Education	2021	Directing: Visual Storytelling - Sundance Co//ab
	2020	Inclusive and Socially Conscious Filmmaking Lab - FilmNorth, St. Paul, MN
	2018 - 2020	Master's of Journalism and Documentary Filmmaking - University of California, Berkeley; Berkeley, CA
	2009 - 2013	Bachelor's of Arts, Anthropology and African Studies - Macalester College; St. Paul, MN
	2011	National Identity and the Arts - School for International Training; Dakar, Senegal
	2007 - 2008	International Baccalaureate - Waterford Kamhlaba United World College of Southern Africa; Mbabane, Eswatini

Select Cinematography

Documentary Features

Profe (2024)
Holder of the Sky (In progress)
Medicine Ball (2026)
The First (In progress)
Spirited (In progress)

Director & Network

Dir. Sergio Rapu - Twin Cities PBS
Dir. Tsanavi Spoonhunter - ITVS
Dir. Leya Hale - Twin Cities PBS
Dir. Andrew Hida - Independent
Dir. Jova Lee Grande - ITVS, Kartemquin

Role

Director of Photography
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Director of Photography
Additional Cinematography
Co-Director of Photography

Documentary Series

Stage (Season 3 & 4, 2023; 2024)
Worn Within (2023)
Building American Futures (2023)
PBS Newshour Trap Shooting (2023)
Once Upon A Bite (2022)

Director & Network

Dir. TPT staff - Twin Cities PBS
Dir. Susan Thao - Twin Cities PBS
Dir. Naz Habtezghi - WNET/PBS
Dir. Megan Thompson - PBS Newshour
Dir. Wenjuan Zheng - Tencent Penguin Pictures

Role

2nd Unit DP (9 eps)
Series Director of Photography (6 eps)
Additional Cinematography (1 ep)
Cinematography (1 ep)
Director of Photography (1 ep)