



# QUEENS WORLD FILM FESTIVAL

## Queens World Film Initiative, Inc. FY 2024 Wrap Report July 2, 2023 - June 31, 2024

Queens World Film Initiative, Inc. is a 501 c3 located in Queens, New York. The arts driven non-profit produces a sprawling multi-venue, multi-day film festival as well as film and media centric programs, events, screenings and other initiatives, all designed to bring filmmakers together with each other and their audiences. FY 2024 was an exciting year and by all counts a successful one!

### **Queens World Film Festival #13 - April 16 - 28, 2024**

During the 2024 submission season, 564 films were submitted from 39 nations. Despite a submission season that was 50% shorter than previous years, we experienced a mere 6% drop in submissions in 2024.

### **Queens World by the numbers: some interesting statistics**

Total Submissions: 564

Total from the US: 323

Total from outside of the US: 238

Total from NYC: 70

Queens: 28

Bronx: 3

Staten Island: 1

Brooklyn: 19

Manhattan: 19

An encouraging statistic shows that even though 23% of the submissions were from filmmakers who identify as women or non-binary, 43% of the films screened were from filmmakers who identify as women or non-binary. Not quite parity, however a significant step.

Over a four-month period, Donald Preston Cato and a team of community members, alumni, industry professionals screened, scored, and discussed the films, ultimately programming a 12 day screening schedule that contained 47 thematic screening blocs featuring 157 films from 19 nations. Of those 157 filmmaking teams, 116 came to participate in the festival in person while another 13 participated in the Welcoming Night international zoom broadcast.

Audiences were supportive with 1,957 tickets purchased through eventbrite and another 392 complimentary passes redeemed. Overall, our ticket revenue increased by 20% (from \$14,799 to \$22,301). Complimentary passes were distributed to college



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classes, special interest clubs, social service organizations, CIGs, and others who might not otherwise be able to experience a screening.

The traffic at both venues rose significantly over the last festival with MoMI showing a 23% increase in attendees (from 791 to 1091 attendees) and the Zukor showing a 62% increase (from 573 to 928 attendees). Our statistics show that 23% of our audience came from outside of the USA - which we think is another encouraging statistic.

The social media impact of Queens World has continued to grow as well. The combined followers rose to 28,606 from 22,320 representing a 28% increase across all social media platforms. Thanks to MOME, 20 Bus Shelter posters were installed running from April 1 – April 30 and we were able to run a contest that rewarded people for locating a poster with a free festival T-shirt. Other notable partners are QEDC, Schneps Media, NYWIFT, SAG/AFTRA, FilmShop and other local film organizations who all helped to get the word out to filmmakers with discounted submission codes and to audience members with discounted ticket codes.

Queens World held several events before the festival, designed to create community, expand the filmmaker's networks, and bring attention to the neighborhoods. Restaurants in the area including Sac's Place and Tacuba reported a combined 20% increase in revenue during the festival season.

The events were:

[March 16: Filmmaker's Kick-Off PotLuck Party](#) (92 attendees)

HIGHLIGHT: Queens World Board Members produced a live broadcast that featured Montaigne Massac in Albany hosting the show remotely, while Anuz Thapa conducted a live feed from the party location. Throughout the evening, filmmakers were able to take a seat on the couch and speak about their upcoming screening at Queens World.

[March 27: Annual Presser](#) (56 attendees)

HIGHLIGHT: Meeting and introducing the new MoMI ED to our filmmakers and other guests. Thanks to the Queens Economic Development Corporation, we were able to run full page ads in the Queens Chronicle and Queens Courier which helped us connect the interested communities across Queens with the right screening blocs.

[April 6: Trailer Party](#) (87 attendees)

HIGHLIGHT: Queens World screened 60 film trailers that gave the audience an idea of what they could expect at the upcoming festival. Filmmakers were able to connect with each other and build on the relationships initiated at the Kickoff party.



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## [April 16: Welcoming Night](#) (72 attendees)

HIGHLIGHT: NYC Film Commissioner Pat Kaufman and Kaufman Astoria Studio Head Hal Rosenbluth helped welcome over 50 filmmakers in person and 13 filmmakers who zoomed in from Nepal, Argentina, Turkey, Italy and Canada. For the first time Queens World was able to welcome filmmakers from faraway places who otherwise would never have been able to join us and truly welcome the world to Queens.

## [April 17: Opening Night](#) 270 attendees

HIGHLIGHT: The opening night thematic bloc was titled TAKE THIS: 7 FILMS THAT REFUSE TO BACK DOWN. It began with a short film that highlights the ungodly decisions parents of young children make when war is outside their door. The remaining series of films reminded us that the human experience can swing from the ridiculous to the horrific in the blink of an eye. The bloc ended with a film that contemplates how we present ourselves and reminds us that sometimes, all it takes is a good haircut.

## **Listening Tour**

[The Listening Tour](#) shares the stories of our resilient, compassionate, and hopeful community and all of the segments are archived in the Queens Memory Project ([www.queensmemory.org](http://www.queensmemory.org)) so that future generations may know how we kept hope alive through these challenging times. In FY 2024, Queens World produced 15 new Listening Tour segments featuring 24 subjects sharing their thoughts on hope and resilience. Two free public screenings of the finished Listening Tour segments were held, one at The Local on November 18, 2023 and one at the Corona Public Library on March 16, 2024. At both screenings the community was encouraged to share their own stories and responses about surviving the pandemic and reopening the world. Special guests included the subjects of the Listening Tour segments, staff from Elmhurst Hospital and members of the Queens Memory Project.

## **Internship Programs**

Every year Queens World provides opportunities for young and emerging creatives to lean into their passion through internships of various lengths and focus. This year the young people were tasked with production assignments along with other festival duties. A HIGHLIGHT of the year was taking the group to Materials for the Arts for a tour and information session with the MFTA Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Ladders for Leaders:** Four participants averaging 150 hours.

All four young people produced Listening Tour segments featuring a range of people from community leaders in Flushing, to theater artists participating in the Queens Theatre for All initiative, to preservationists in Rockaway. All in all, they produced a total of 11 short videos about many members of the Queens World community. This



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group also worked on an extensive archiving project that produced digital books that document the first ten years of the festival.

**Reel/Works MediaMkrs:** 7 participants averaging 120 hours each.

The young media makers produced Listening Tour segments, three of them participated in the festival Screening & Selection Committee, and three of them hosted screenings at the festival.

**John Jay Micro-Internships:** 3 participants averaging 12 hours each.

Each participant produced a Listening Tour.

**Industry Scholars Program:** 2 participants averaging 100 hours.

Participants created promotional videos and chronicled key screenings at the festival, and edited a sizzle reel of our hosts introducing the audiences to Queens World.

## Encore Screenings

[November 10, 2023: Be My Oswald: A Queens World Fundraiser](#)

Queens World Artistic Director Donald Preston Cato's irreverent feature that takes on Santa is an annual screening fundraiser benefiting the Queens World Film Festival. Following the screening an after party was held at Sac's Place in Astoria.

[June 7 Taking Pride in the Community at Flushing Town Hall: 33 attendees](#)

In partnership with Flushing Town Hall, Queens World presented six short films from the most recent festival followed by a reception and Q&A with the filmmakers hosted by arts administrator and policymaker Gonzalo Casal who is also the Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Culture & Arts Policy Institute.

[June 16: Celebrating Pride at Elmhurst Hospital](#) 87 attendees

Through our long-standing partnership with Elmhurst Hospital Center, we supplied them with a selection of LGBTQ themed films to play for their staff during Pride Month.

## Special Events

[Film Fest Fusion: The Queens Edition](#): 48 attendees

On June 29, Queens World welcomed other Queens festivals to the Zukor Theatre for an opportunity to connect the NYC filmmaking community with the varied and diverse film festivals. The extremely well attended event kicked off with a light brunch hosted by NYWIFTV followed by a lively panel discussion in partnership with The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment with an after party at Sac's Place in Astoria. Queens World also brought activations to several street fairs and community celebrations across Queens.