STORIES & INSIGHTS

Meet Yasmin Mistry

STORIES & INSIGHTS · 2 DAYS AGO

We were lucky to catch up with Yasmin Mistry recently and have shared our conversation below.

Yasmin, appreciate you joining us today. Alright, so you had your idea and then what happened? Can you walk us through the story of how you went from just an idea to executing on the idea

I was volunteering with youth in the foster care system as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) while simultaneously running a design and animation business (ideogyn creative).

Prior to becoming a CASA I didn't know much about the U.S. foster care system and I was truly shocked at how little say the youth seemed to have in their own lives. These kids had been placed in the child welfare system through no fault of their own. Now they were being bounced around to different school and homes, often with no advance notice or given reason.

I wanted to use my film and animation skills to give those with lived experience in the system an opportunity to be heard. I launched a social media campaign (@fostercarefilm) and reached out to current and former foster youth about sharing their stories. I received an overwhelming possibly fit into a single film. So, as interest grew, the project grew with it.

The Foster Care Film and Community Engagement Project (FCFCEP) was born. It began as an all-volunteer passion project and grew slowly over time. Foster care alumni, social workers, foster/adoptive parents and siblings, all worked behind the scenes. They fulfilled various roles as producers, musicians, artists, writers, production assistants, camera operators and more, working alongside industry professionals to ensure authenticity.

In order to sustain the project, I applied for fiscal sponsorship and grants. I researched distribution opportunities (educational, broadcast, SVOD, AVOD) and partnered with non-profits to host numerous in-person and virtual film tours.

Today FCFCEP is made up of an amazing team of artists. We have released 4 short films (*Feeling Wanted, Family Rewritten, My Identity, and For A Better Life*). Each of these films has been released alongside an impact campaign. Film participants, as well as local foster parents, social workers, service providers and foster care alumni share their stories on panels at community events, trainings, and conferences nationwide.

We also have a fifth film currently airing on PBS (KosencoPresencia), and a feature documentary in the works. However, none of this would have been possible without the brave individuals who volunteered to share their stories, and the friends who worked on our shoestring budget to ensure these stories got told.

Yasmin, before we move on to more of these sorts of questions, can you take some time to bring our readers up to speed on you and what you do?

I began my career as a freelance graphic designer. After studying animation in grad school I expanded my freelance business to include motion graphics, visual effects, and art direction. Soon after, I turned my sole proprietorship into an LLC and began expanding my team.

While I continue to work as a designer, motion graphics animator and art director, my career also took an unexpected turn into the world of film. After being inspired by my work as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) I launched the Foster Care Film and Community Engagement Project (FCFCEP) to help foster youth share their stories.

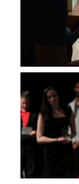
Today I work as a director and producer of animated and hybrid documentary films.

A full bio is included below:

YASMIN MISTRY | DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

Yasmin Mistry is an Emmy-nominated animator and award-winning filmmaker, who blends these creative mediums to tell character-driven stories with an intimate lens. Her work has been displayed worldwide, including showings at the United Nations and White House as well as at SXSW, Tribeca Film Festival, DOC NYC, and more. She is the recipient of funding

from the Jerome Foundation, Center of Asian American Media (CAAM), Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ms. Foundation for Women, Brooklyn Arts Council, Puffin Foundation, Riverside Sharing Fund, and Hamisch Foundation and was a finalist in the ITVS Open Call. Films from her documentary shorts series about foster care have been featured in over 140 film festivals and nominated for more than 85 awards. In 2018, She received the CASA Hero Award for her advocacy work, giving youth in the child welfare system an opportunity to be heard. When not making films, Yasmin works as a programmer for the Anchorage International Film Festival, a screener for the Blackbird Film Festival, and has been a co-leader for the filmmaking collaborative Blockshop. She is currently in production on a feature documentary about family separation, forgiveness and the path towards healing.



Any advice for managing a team?

It's important to surround yourself with people who are as passionate about the work as you are. Someone who has a personal interest in the social issues you're trying to raise awareness about, is more likely to remain dedicated during all the natural ups and downs of a long-term project.

Contact Info:

- **Website:** www.ideogyn.com | www.fostercarefilm.com
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- **Facebook:** https://www.facebook.com/fostercarefilm
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- **Twitter:** https://twitter.com/FosterCareFilm

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