

Hi! We're a couple of fledgling Chicano filmmakers from Southern California. (Not sure if it's allowed to apply as a team, but we figured we'd give it a shot.) Fledgling doesn't mean young, though—we started our first short, *Obituary* (our work sample), about five years ago in our late 30s/early 40s, when the pandemic, for better or for worse, put some extra time on our hands. Before that, we were working regular jobs and chipping away at the industry—Celeste, acting, Jose, a YouTube host and clip show producer.

Despite MANY setbacks and false starts, we've always been ride or die movie lovers—story lovers—with a bleeding heart for horror. Between us, we stack the queue from ridiculous B to the artiest of arthouse. Now that we have a bit of footing, we aim to keep writing and producing more. After all, the thirst for horror is unquenchable. We're shooting a new short in Joshua Tree in February 2026, and we're also fleshing out a couple of features.

We see Square Peg Social as a unique chance to meet other filmmakers, get ideas on the process, get advice, join a community, and get inspired. We want to encounter people who've figured out how to make it all work—especially outside traditional gatekeeping structures.

Going deeper, we also feel driven by the lack of plentiful Latino representation in film. And yes, things are changing—it's heartening to see more Latinos in lead and supporting roles, in front of and behind the camera. But there's still a looong way to go. We can't help but imagine that if we were a bigger part of the media landscape, it'd be harder to dehumanize us and brutally kick us out of the country simply for showing up to work. Definitely a longer conversation.

Another reason we're drawn to Square Peg: as Chicanos a couple generations deep, we didn't grow up speaking great Spanish, and our upbringing didn't fit the stereotypical "Mexican-American" *vida*. You could say whitewashed—but it's not quite that. It's a common, in-between experience: *ni de aquí, ni de allá*. Not fitting in: a square peg. So yes, we want to tell stories that reflect our Latino heritage—but also stories where the characters just happen to be Latino, where they face dark forces and maybe (maybe not) survive. Representation, a voice.

Speaking of voice, we're still developing ours: we know we want to get darker, and also, counterintuitively, funnier, and achieve TRULY scary stuff. Coming to Square Peg feels like a it'd be step in the right direction.