

April Disability Awareness

April is an important month for disability awareness. It's a time to celebrate our muses, lift up the people who make this community such a joy to be part of, and recognize the incredible talent within it. Our whole studio started because of our original muse, John Paul (yes, you may recognize that name from one of our designs!). So this month, more than any other, feels like the right time to shine the spotlight on someone who has been part of the ALLELES family for years.

Aisha Singleton, a BK amputee and proud ALLELES wearer 😊, participated in the 13th Annual Easterseals Disability Film Challenge (EDFC). Aisha stepped into the role of filmmaker, got behind the camera, and created a short film that is equal parts personal and powerful. She was kind enough to answer a few questions about her film, her creative process, and what disability means to her.

Read our interview below. And please, please, please go show Aisha some love! You can watch her short film below, and if you're feeling ambitious, dive into the full 144-entries watchlist (a record year for the challenge!!). We haven't made it through all of them yet... but we're working on it!

Entries watchlist



Behind the scene
snapshots

Your short film is about a DJ on a mission to get her (very cute) service dog back. How did you decide on that story to tell?

Good Girl Gone is a dramedy short made for the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge. It follows Sabrina, a hot-shot Coachella DJ whose world is turned upside down when her service dog goes missing forcing her to team up with her wonderfully chaotic sister Hilary, a part-time clown with a surprising set of skills, to track down whoever took her dog. It's an homage to The Wiz and Wizard of Oz, part One of Them Days, part Napoleon Dynamite a story about two disabled BIPOC women who refuse to be underestimated, the bond that's their real superpower, and one very important dog who happens to be a covert government operative who deserves to come home.

The inspiration was personal. Growing up, my beloved Doberman was stolen, and I was completely devastated. He wasn't a service animal, but he was my best friend. As an adult, I kept coming back to the question of how I would handle that now? The answer was simple: I'd go full John Wick.

When I approached my neighbor Sabeerah Najee, the actress who plays Sabrina and founder of Accessible+ (A+), a multi-impact program for disabled

artists at Coachella, she loved the concept and brought in the spy element. My longtime collaborator Haily Bond, who plays Hilary, comes from an improv comedy background by way of the Groundlings. I knew she'd be perfect for the role, and she also juggled acting and styling throughout the shoot.

What drew you to the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge specifically? What did it mean to you to submit to a platform built around disability representation?

I was first introduced to the Easterseals Disability Film Challenge after writing a coming-of-age TV pilot centered on a precocious teen who becomes an amputee and is simultaneously thrust into popularity. A mutual friend and fellow director encouraged me to take part, I registered, and the rest is history.

The challenge was founded 13 years ago by Nic Novicki an actor, writer, and little person, to give disabled creators a platform to showcase their talent on their own terms. This is disability storytelling done right: by us, for us, with disabled creatives in front of and behind the camera. It means the world to me and has been genuinely instrumental in my career. Through the EDFC, I was nominated to participate in the CBS Leadership Pipeline, recognized as Best Emerging Casting Director, and received the EDFC x Adobe Alumni Grant, which is helping me develop my short film Ghost Bae into a web series.

How do you personally think about representation for amputees and limb-different people in film and media? What's missing, and what's getting better?

Representation has improved, but there's still a long way to go. I've heard so many stories of actors' limbs or lack thereof being tokenized rather than celebrated. And with so many DEIA (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility) initiatives dismantled by the current administration, the landscape has shifted noticeably. Many actors with limb loss or limb

difference who once had a steady stream of work, including commercials, haven't booked anything in over a year. What's still missing are prominent leading roles where disability isn't the central focus of a character's entire storyline. It was a genuine thrill to watch Zyra Gorecki as a series regular on NBC's *La Brea*, and more recently, Gracie McGonical was an absolute scene-stealer in Season 4 of *Bridgerton*. More of that, please.



@aishasingleton

Did your own experience as an amputee shape any of the creative choices you made in the film?

Deeply, and I think that's just inevitable it's woven into who I am as a person and as a creator. I've carried a lot of internalized ableism, and until recently, I hadn't fully been out of the closet professionally about being an amputee. Production work demands long hours of standing, bending, and lifting and the EDFC is entirely volunteer-based, so we made this film with very few resources.

That scarcity became its own creative gift. We had to ask for help from friends, family, and filmmaking communities and I think that's actually the moral of the story: asking for help, and encouraging our kin, friends, and co-workers to offer it even when we insist we're fine. Because sometimes we're not, and the

results of going it alone can be catastrophic. Necessity is the mother of invention.

One of my favorite examples was we didn't have a dolly, so we used a wheelchair instead. I'd picked up a technique at a Cinematography for Actors workshop, and our DP (cinematographer) was pushed along Sunset Blvd in that chair, following the actors in motion. It worked beautifully.

What do you hope viewers take away from your film?

A feeling of whimsy and lightheartedness and a new way of seeing disabled characters. Heroic, weird, flawed, and funny. All at once.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Honestly, I don't know that I would've had the confidence to appear on camera in my EDFC films without my Alleles covers. I'm most comfortable behind the camera but wearing them makes me feel bolder. They make me want to show up and show off!

Watch Party

In case you missed it, we've got Aisha's short-movie below!

🎬 Watch it, and maybe binge all the other submission while you're at it ;)
Let's show some well-deserved love & praise!



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