

PRESS KIT



# I AM

directed by TONY DIA



## FILM SYNOPSIS

"Ethan lives separate lives as a socially awkward college student by day and a fearlessly glamorous drag queen by night. That is, until his life is turned upside-down by Kekoa, his school crush. As his two worlds collide, Ethan is forced to confront his fear of change in order to win the boy of his dreams."





## DIRECTOR + CO-WRITER

### TONY DIA

is a first gen Filipino-American whose goal is to shine a light on QTBIPOC+ communities and stories through film. He strives to serve as a platform to the underrepresented, colorful voices that he believes should be heard.

### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I find that LGBTQ+ media is heavy on the trauma of growing up queer. Though I believe it is necessary that those important topics are covered, I had also yearned for something hopeful and lighthearted as a teen. That is why my partner Von Ka'anā'anā and I wrote this film. Our community is so vibrant. The art of drag, the unconditional love of chosen family, and the wonderful feeling of belonging. Yes, it is a story about romance, but it is also about the beauty of our people wrapped in the gayest little package of rhinestones and stilettos.



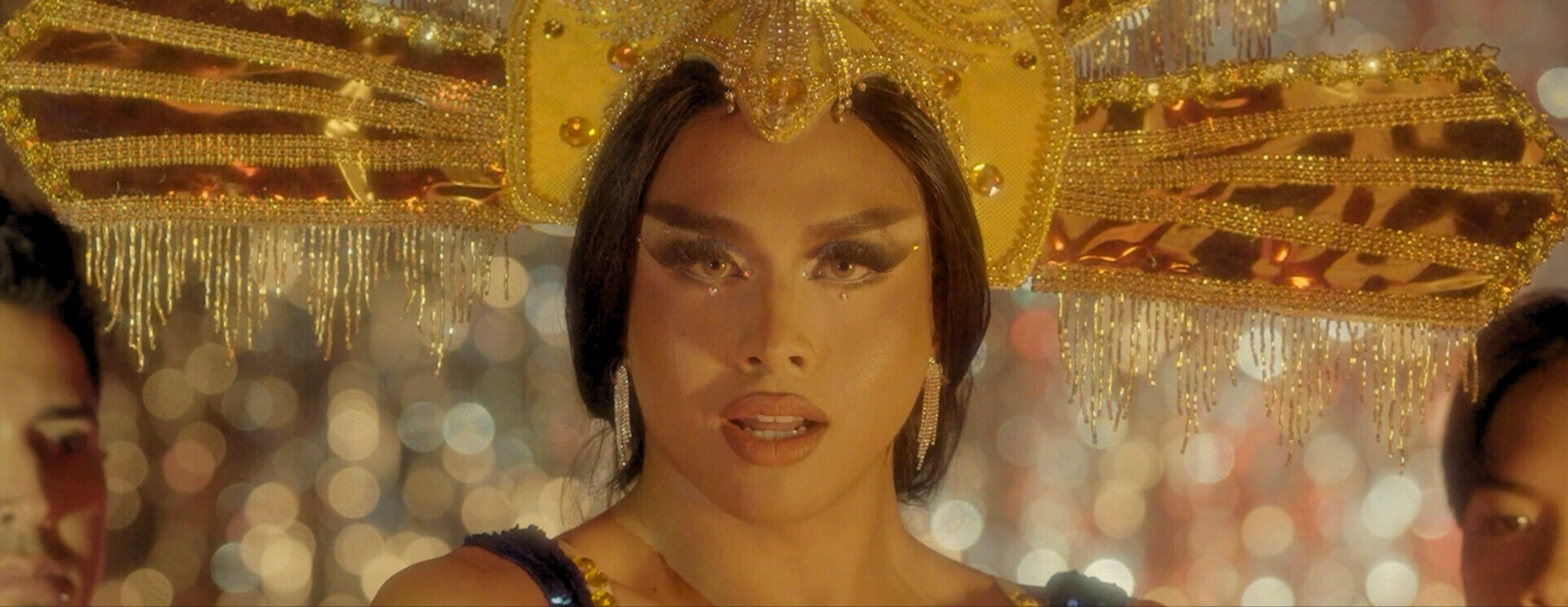
**CO-WRITER + CO-PRODUCER**

## VON KA'ANĀ'ANĀ

is a Kānaka Maoli + Tangata Whenua O'ahu-born Māhū filmmaker and artist. He co-wrote *I Am* with his partner Tony Dia. He is an advocate for radical social activism, indigenous freedom, and queer expression.

## WRITERS STATEMENT

"We believe QTIBIPOC deserve happy endings. Our purpose behind the creation of this project was to uplift the talents, stories and spirits of the vibrantly queer and ethnically diverse community of Hawai'i. We as Māhū belong to a chosen family whose lineage trace back to ancient times - as such we want to remind the world of our ability to heal through storytelling. We created a universe of Homonormativity where people can be themselves without cause or restraint. We wanted a story that is free from queer and culturally traumatic experiences used as a vehicle for white cishet entertainment - this is a film made by Queer people."



## THE INSPIRATION

This film is inspired by our own experiences and those of the people around us, especially our drag family. As local drag performers, their colorful dating life—meeting partners both in and out of drag—leads to unique, sometimes unexpected situations. Some drag performers use their drag persona to explore and cultivate the confidence they lack in their everyday lives. This story captures that journey of self-discovery, identity, and love.

# THE COMMUNITY OF HAWAI'I

*I Am* is inspired by the very real people that make up Hawai'i's LGBTQIA+ community. Our Queer ancestors come from a lineage of Māhū that have the ability to heal others through Mo'olelo or story telling.

We believe Queer people deserve happy endings – so “I Am” is a charming story about chosen family, friendship, love, support, and stepping into your power.



# CAST

I AM





# SPENCER ILAGAN

as **ETHAN / MALAYA**

Spencer Ilagan, a proud Filipino-American born and raised in Mililani, Hawai'i, is a vibrant member of the LGBTQIA+ community, representing and celebrating feminine boys. Known for his captivating stage presence, he performs as Pia Zamora, a main cast member of the doll.haus. show at Scarlet Honolulu. In addition to his drag career, Spencer is also a distinguished member of the Iconic International Haus of Ninja, where he is recognized as Pia Ninja in the ballroom scene. With a runway strut that commands attention, Pia has earned multiple trophies, solidifying his reputation as a standout performer in both drag and ballroom culture. His passion for performance extends beyond the stage, as he embarks on an exciting journey into acting. Spencer dreams big – setting his sights higher than Mount Apo. He is deeply grateful that his debut acting performance was alongside an incredible cast and crew and hopes to continue growing as an artist, inspiring others to embrace their authenticity and chase their dreams.

# KALEO PINTO

as KEKOA

Kaleo Pinto was born and raised in Kailua, O'ahu where he began acting at a young age in various stage productions in both English and Hawaiian – his first language. His time spent with Ron Bright was integral to his foundation as an artist. He started dancing hula in high school and went on to dance professionally after graduating from Kamehameha in 2015. He has performed in lū'au and productions across Hawai'i, the U.S. and internationally. Following the pandemic, he moved to LA to further his acting career. After working with various directors there, he moved on to Vegas where he worked as an expert client advisor and visual merchandiser for Louis Vuitton. In Vegas, he continued his acting training under Dean Kreyling and added circus training to his resume. He is trained as an aerialist disciplined in silks, lyra, and straps. He made his film debut in 2023 in the film "My Partner" and was traveled around the world to various film festivals to promote it.

Returning to his piko, Kaleo moved home to Hawaii in 2024 where he wasted no time getting back to work, now working as assistant creative director for Ari South. He recently finished the ICan acting intensive, training under Alex Tarrant, Daniel Dae Kim, Alex O'Loughlin and Angie Laprete. He now travels between Hawaii, Las Vegas, and LA continuing his career as an actor and model.





# RAQUEL LARGO

as REYNA

Raquel Largo, also known as Miss Kelly Price, is a dynamic performer from O'ahu, Hawai'i. She is a proud trans woman from Hawai'i's LGBTQ+ community and a main cast member of the doll.haus. show at Scarlet Honolulu. Raquel holds three lipsync crowns and is recognized as one of O'ahu's top lip-sync assassins.

Beyond the stage, Raquel's debut acting role has been a transformative experience, further fueling her mission to inspire and empower other trans women. She hopes to encourage those who dream of being seen but may hesitate to step into the spotlight. With the unwavering support of her family, friends, and faith, Raquel continues to work tirelessly toward her goal of becoming a household name—proving that "The Price is Always Right."

# HINAMOE'ATU FALE

as NOA

Hinamoe'atu Fale was born and raised in Lā'ie, Hawai'i or what they like to call "the deep East" of O'ahu. They began acting in middle school and found a home in the Kahuku theater program. "I didn't realize it at the time, but theater was basically where all of the queer kids gathered. It was a safe space in the middle of our Mormon community for everyone who didn't quite fit the mold." It wasn't until leaving home for college that Hina began to question and explore gender and sexuality. "As you can imagine, there wasn't a lot of queer representation in Lā'ie. Being anything other than straight never crossed my mind because in my world it just wasn't an option. That all changed when I moved to Honolulu for school." While attending Chaminade University, Hina met and befriended many queer people and became a regular audience member at Bar7. Today they've moved from the audience onto the stage, performing as Oliver Tits. Oliver is a cast member of the [doll.haus](#) show at Scarlet Honolulu.



# PRODUCTION TEAM



**Erin Arashiro**

PRODUCER

Erin Arashiro is a Digital Cinema graduate from the School of Cinematic Arts at UH Mānoa with a passion for uplifting and highlighting underrepresented stories. She also has a specific interest in book-to-screen adaptations and is working towards the field as a producer or AD. Her creative inspirations include music acts like Seventeen and directors like Christopher Nolan and Chloe Zhao.



**Hannah Parkus**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Hannah Parkus is a Digital Cinema graduate from the School of Cinematic Arts at UH Mānoa. She has always had a passion for filmmaking and has interned for Lilo & Stitch, NFL films, and was awarded the Provost Fellowship from UH Mānoa. Commercially, she specializes in documentary, fashion, beauty, and lifestyle.



**Kara Abaya**

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
CO-PRODUCER

Kara Abaya is a Digital Cinema major and Business Admin minor graduate from UH Mānoa who focuses on productions with a Native Hawaiian perspective and has a great passion aiding in productions that tell personal and underrepresented stories. She is working towards more opportunities on productions that inspire her, while also finding more time to further her skills in her areas of interest; production management & editing.



**Richard Aiwohi-Kim**

CO-EDITOR

Richard Aiwohi-Kim is a double major graduate in Studio Art & Digital Cinema in the Department of Art & Art History and the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. His interests vary from studying cinema history, ethics and media culture. His first film "Qualm" won the Imagine Award at the 2023 SCA at UH Mānoa awards showcase

# KEY FACTS

**GENRE  
SUBCATEGORIES** Romance, Comedy

**LENGTH** Short

**TOTAL  
RUNNING TIME** 19 minutes

**LANGUAGES** English, Hawaiian Pidgin

**PRODUCTION  
COMPANY** Aikāne Media

**PRODUCTION  
YEAR** 2024

**PRODUCTION  
LOCATION** Hawai'i, US

**EXHIBITION  
FORMATS** Digital Projection (DCP)

**ASPECT RATIO** 16:9

**SUBTITLES** English, Hawaiian Pidgin

**AUDIO  
FORMAT** Advanced Audio Technology



# FESTIVALS





**THANK YOU**

**WEBSITE**

[iamashortfilm.com](http://iamashortfilm.com)

**EMAIL**

[iamashortfilm@gmail.com](mailto:iamashortfilm@gmail.com)