

ITVS Launches New Online Mini Docu-series
"PARTY GIRLS: Exploring Politics Across America"

San Francisco – ITVS, the award-winning incubator and producer of the public television documentary series *Independent Lens*, today announced the launch of a new six-part docu-series *PARTY GIRLS: Exploring Politics Across America*.

The series was created by veteran non-fiction television producer/director Michele Barnwell and airs January 20, 2017 on the ITVS YouTube Channel— with its first two episodes and new episodes released daily after launch.

PARTY GIRLS (as in political party) follows six millennial American women of color who are first-time voters, as they road trip through various states exploring the national political landscape in the lead up to the 2016 Presidential election.

The series gives the audience an insider's view of the thoughts, questions and concerns of these impressive young women—handpicked from a pool of applicants Barnwell interviewed across several states in order to assemble a cast with diverse life experiences and political views. The women, ages 19 through 25, had never met before journeying together to attend the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, rural North Carolina to explore environmental issues in that region; and later meet with Ron Davis, father of African American teen Jordan Davis who was shot to death while listening to loud music in a parking lot with friends. The healthy (and, at some points, heated) bipartisan conversations the cast has on the issues of today makes *PARTY GIRLS* an important series that grants behind-the-scenes access to the youth that are shaping the future of this country.

The cast includes:

Sarah Khan (22) – a South-Asian American Muslim woman who chooses to wear a hijab and is outspoken in her personal and political convictions. Sarah, an affable young recent graduate of the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, is from a close-knit Michigan family and has her undergraduate degree in International/Comparative Studies with a minor in Arab/Muslim-American Studies.

Kayla Williams (20) – a preacher's daughter from southern California who admits to having a steep learning curve when it comes to political awareness and personal identity. Kayla is transferring to an Arts college in San Francisco to pursue a creative/entertainment field of study.

Matisse Rogers (19) – a Minnesota-born, once politically undecided, college sophomore who says her friends and family have heavily influenced her political beliefs. Aiming to learn more about what she herself truly believes, Matisse applies a passion for discovery with an honest desire to understand the issues and their impact.

Jessica Burnett (22) – a registered Republican from Georgia who holds an undergraduate degree from Georgia State in English Literature. Jessica is the daughter of a 20-year Marine father and a career military mother who once worked for Colin Powell, both of whom are registered Democrats. Jessica, who discovered her right-wing political beliefs on her own, defines herself as a fiscally driven Constitutionalist.

Mitzi Salgado (25) – a California born Mexican-American woman with a degree in Women’s Studies from the University of California Riverside and strong feminist views. When she was nine years old, her family moved to Mexico but she remained enrolled in U.S. schools—which meant commuting daily with her father between Tijuana and San Diego for about a decade.

Khala James (20) – a second-generation student at the historically black college Howard University where she’s a Political Science major and philosophy minor. Khala is a passionate advocate for survivors of domestic violence and a proud Democrat. She also cares deeply about the restoration of voting rights to formerly incarcerated Americans.

“It was simply exhilarating to see the cast make this journey their own and to have the opportunity to amplify their voices,” says series creator Michele Barnwell— who is executive producer and director for L.A. based production company, Reel Roost. “And making this specific project with ITVS— a place respected for their support of untold stories and emergent voices —made all the sense in the world to me. “It was an incredible experience to have the creative autonomy to make PARTY GIRLS with such an emotionally intelligent cast of young women and then to have it airing via Independent Lens. It’s all very much a blessing.”

“We’re so excited to work with Michele Barnwell and launch ‘Party Girls,’” said Karim Ahmad, Supervising Producer for ITVS. “Short-form digital series, like ‘Party Girls,’ are such an important way to manifest the stories of young people of color that can embed and spread to all corners of the internet, meet them where they’re already consuming content, and engage them in public dialogue around important topics like these.”

About ITVS

ITVS is a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films and then airs them for free on PBS via our weekly series, Independent Lens, as well as other series and our digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For more information, visit itvs.org

About Reel Roost

Reel Roost Inc. is a transmedia production company specializing in story-driven content creation and production. We are excited by non-traditional casting and endeavor to produce great stories with dimensional yet humanizing depictions of all people but especially underrepresented communities, people of color, and Black women in particular. Our work is fueled by an enthusiasm for telling great stories about relatable characters that refresh, challenge and compel conversation...by any medium necessary. Michele Barnwell, a veteran producer of nonfiction media (America's Next Top Model/CW, Brave New Voices/HBO, All American Muslim/TLC, will.i.am's Legandado/INTEL), is executive producer for Reel Roost. For more see ReelRoost.com