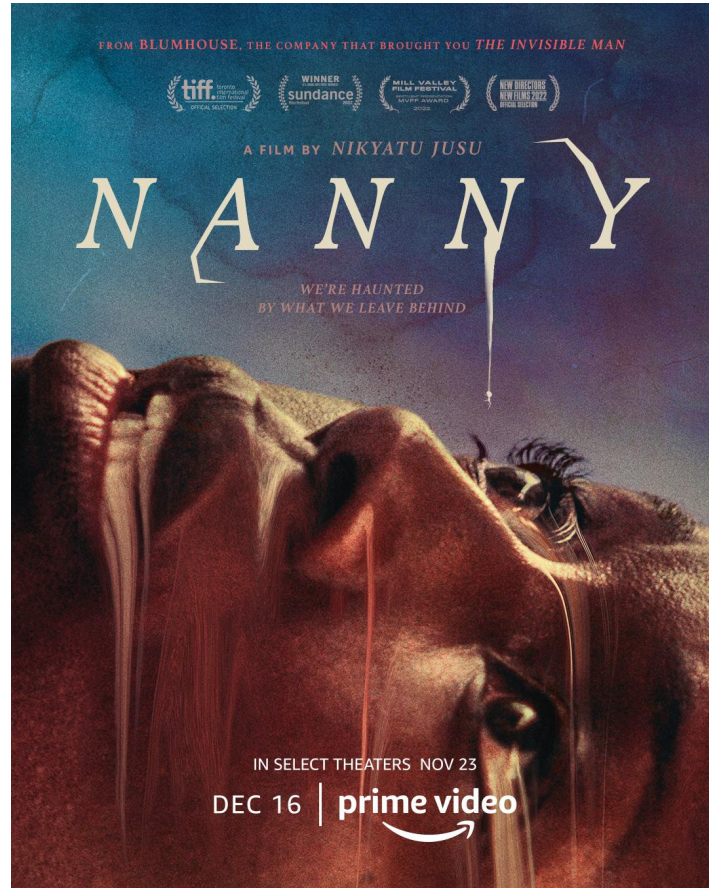


prime video

NANNY



Select theaters November 23 and Prime Video Globally on December 16

#NannyFilm @PrimeVideo

Directed By: Nikyatu Jusu

Written By: Nikyatu Jusu

Produced By: Nikkia Moulterier, Daniela Taplin Lundberg

Executive Produced By: Maria Zuckerman, Ryan Heller, Michael Bloom, Jason Blum, Rebecca Cammarata, Bill Benenson, Nnamdi Asomugha, Laurie Benenson, Grace Lay, Sumalee Montano, Nikyatu Jusu, Chris McCumber, Jeremy Gold

Running Time: 98 minutes | **Rated:** R

NANNY



LOGLINE

Aisha is an undocumented nanny working for a privileged couple in New York City. As she prepares for the arrival of the son she left behind in West Africa, a violent presence invades her reality, threatening the American dream she is painstakingly piecing together.

SYNOPSIS

In this psychological horror fable of displacement, Aisha (Anna Diop), a woman who recently emigrated from Senegal, is hired to care for the daughter of an affluent couple (Michelle Monaghan and Morgan Spector) living in New York City. Haunted by the absence of the young son she left behind, Aisha hopes her new job will afford her the chance to bring him to the U.S., but becomes increasingly unsettled by the family's volatile home life. As his arrival approaches, a violent presence begins to invade both her dreams and her reality, threatening the American dream she is painstakingly piecing together.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

There is a league of domestic workers pushing strollers, feeding picky babies, and shuttling toddlers from music class to yoga all across New York City. These women, disproportionately of color, are indispensable to city families, but are too often invisibilized. Director Nikyatu Jusu, whose acclaimed short *Suicide by Sunlight*, shines a light on this work force in her debut feature *Nanny*.

Inside the walls of a dark and uninviting loft, in one of New York City's toniest neighborhoods, we meet Aisha (Anna Diop). An immigrant from Senegal with a masters degree in English, Aisha takes a nannying job caring for a small girl named Rose (Rose Decker) so she can bring

her son, Lamine, to the United States. Aisha's seemingly benevolent and affluent white employers are Amy (Michelle Monaghan), a career-driven woman thwarted by more powerful men in her field, and Adam (Morgan Spector), a pseudo progressive photojournalist with a wandering eye who dips in and out of the couple's home. Nothing is as it seems, and Aisha's life begins to unravel when her American Dream is punctured by the realities of what it means to be a Black immigrant woman in America.

"My [mother] is the springboard of everything, she's the springboard of this idea," said Jusu. "She did a lot of domestic work growing up, but she is a brilliant woman who had goals and dreams of her own that she had to sacrifice for the 'American Dream,'" the director continued. "The entry point [to the American Dream] for a lot of Black and Brown immigrant women and Black American women is domestic labor." Diop was inspired by her mother's experiences as well. "I meditated on my own mother's life. She, like Aisha, was also an immigrant and became a domestic worker. And she did that for more than 20 years," said the actor. "There are so many similarities between Aisha and my mother, and I think a lot of what I was able to do with this character was innate, because I've known her my whole life, and I love her so much," she continued. "I think it's just that way that we know things that are bigger than us, but are very much a part of us. It's our lineage and our ancestors."

A cross-genre film with elements of horror, *Nanny* concerns itself most primarily with its protagonist. "I think that in a world that centers a particular gaze, this film does the opposite," said Nikkia Moulterie, one of the film's creative producers. "It really was about Aisha, this African woman's journey through her experience as a nanny in New York," she continued. "I think it was just always about staying true to Aisha's experiences and not really having to be responsible to anyone else beyond that." Jusu drew on diasporic African traditions as a way of expressing Aisha's challenges. "Both Anansi and Mami Wata have different iterations and names in African Diasporic cultures and indigenous cultures – the trickster figure [Anansi] in particular," Jusu explained. "As I've matured, I've formed an affinity for learning about the ways my ancestors resisted and persisted, pulling from their stories as inspiration in these dark times," she said in a previous Q&A.

Amy consistently underpays or neglects to pay Aisha when she's supposed to, and this, as well as Aisha's strong bond with Rose, makes Amy jealous, and their new working relationship becomes frayed. But there are similarities to their circumstances too. "I think what I found to be really interesting about the two characters is that they're these two different perspectives, the intersection of both of their lives of womanhood and motherhood, and then both of them having to balance their own work and their own lives," said Monaghan. "They both need each other in order to survive what's going on outside the home."

Spector considered his character's orientation to Aisha to be quite different from Monaghan's. "With Adam, I wanted to almost have the inverse of Amy and Aisha's relationship. There seems to be this outward basis for a sort of solidarity around politics and around a level of awareness, but actually, that's masking something more predatory and more structurally imbalanced," Spector said.

Getting Lamine to America proves financially challenging, and Aisha's world starts to collapse when West African mythological supernatural forces Mami Wata and Anansi The Spider begin to haunt her. Diop, who rehearsed with a professor to hone her accent for hours a day,

intentionally prepared very little for this aspect of her role: "I did a tiny bit of research on these West African supernatural elements because I wasn't that familiar with them," said Diop. "But I actually didn't want to do too much because Aisha herself isn't familiar with it, and so as it's happening to her, she's discovering it. I wanted to really exist in the confusion she's experiencing."

Aisha is the only character being plagued by Mami Wata, which alienates and isolates her. "Always the challenge with genre is: how does the monster become a manifestation of what the protagonist is navigating," Jusu contemplated. "I wanted to portray the alienation that happens when it feels like you're being spoken to from a spiritual realm and nobody else can see or hear it" she said. "And you don't know if you're losing your mind," she continued. "So it's a very isolating, alienating experience. And outside of Aisha navigating the obstacles that she's navigating, she's also navigating this additional sensibility that she hasn't been taught to nurture and embrace."

Aisha does end up telling two people about her interactions with the dark force: Malik (Sinqua Walls), the doorman in Amy and Adam's building with whom Aisha has a budding romance, and his grandmother (Leslie Uggams), who is quite familiar with the supernatural world. Malik offers Aisha a way out of the darkness she is experiencing, as a mother and domestic worker, by supporting her and showing her lightness. "The ray of light that he gives is constantly reminding us: we can choose to embrace negativity, and it'll keep us in one place, or we can choose to embrace positivity and continue to go forward," said Walls of his character. "Because at the end of the day, we're going to always have to fluctuate between that balance. I think the active choice Malik makes every day to choose light is why he became more light filled in the film."

Putting together the right filmmaking team for *Nanny* was essential. Jusu wanted to be bolstered by colleagues willing to make her ambitious vision come alive. The director's longtime producing partner, Nikkia Moulterrie, was the first on board. "It starts with the script and being honest with her about where things are, and being the voice of reason when it's maybe not optimal," said Moulterrie of her role. "Just really being supportive and ushering the project along at its various stages." Moulterrie and Jusu courted Daniela Taplin Lundberg (Stay Gold Features) to come onto the project. "I am so proud of being able to identify filmmakers that I think are really going to make an impact not only on our industry, but the world at large," Taplin said of Jusu. "I just thought this is a filmmaker that's going to really make a mark on the industry. And if I can help her do that then that's the whole reason I produce."

From his first viewing, Jason Blum, Executive Producer and Founder and CEO of Blumhouse, knew the film was unlike anything he had seen before. "As producers, we're always looking for original voices and stories. Nikyatu's film is the type of movie we're drawn to - it doesn't fit neatly into one box of genre storytelling - it's psychologically thrilling, a supernatural horror, mystical and folkloric, but has moments of levity and light. As a father, I can relate to the fear and terror around not being with your children so also in that sense the film moved me. It's haunting and stayed with me and the Blumhouse team long after we watched it."

There are many components that contribute to creating *Nanny's* tone and texture. The way the film is shot reflects dredgery and looming horror. "I lit the film's two worlds with a stylistic dichotomy in mind, with Amy's world lit by LEDs and other modern sources to imbue its

clinical and linear feel, while the camera language is more composed and static," said the film's Director of Photography Rina Yang. "Aisha's world was shot more handheld and intimate, lit mostly by tungstens and some fluorescents to make it feel warm, cozy, and comfortable."

Costume Designer, Charlese Antoinette Jones created a color palette for each of her characters. "I wanted Aisha's clothes to match the way she's feeling in every environment," said Jones. "You'll notice that marigold yellow is her happy color, and wears that when she's in a space where she feels happy and secure. You know, she's shining brightly," she said.

Production Designer Jonathan Guggenheim describes his process for Amy and Adam's loft. "It felt like a haunted house to me. So much of the mental turmoil and emotional collapse Aisha experiences happens in this house. Aisha is quite unfamiliar with this untouchable world," he said. "It reminded me of Mia Farrow's apartment in *Rosemary's Baby*. What should have felt like an inviting open refuge safe from the hustle of the outside world is actually an insufferable nightmare that closes in on these characters."

Perhaps the most common refrain from *Nanny's* cast and crew was their appreciation for Jusu's approach to directing. "Nikyatu is so incredibly collaborative, so everything I tossed at her she vibed with and we used it to layer and add nuance to the character," said Diop. "What I love about Nikyatu as a filmmaker is that she's very open to collaboration and communication," said Walls. "She's also very transparent, so we talked about a lot of things like the influence of African culture and history, and about Black culture and African American culture in America."

Centering Aisha, the main character, wasn't always simple. "I've had to navigate making sure that we linger in Aisha's POV heavily in post production," Jusu said. "It's just so ingrained in this industry to center on whiteness, that even when you have a Black woman filmmaker who has written the Black woman protagonist, there are certain stages of this process where you have to remind everyone that this is the main character, and we are seeing the world through her eyes," she continued. "It can be exhausting." As a graduate of NYU film school, Jusu attributes much of her confidence to having learned how to edit as well as write and direct.

Though the film is a singular work, it does stand on the shoulders of many others. Jusu names writers Saidiya Hartman, Zora Neale Hurston, Nikki Giovanni, and filmmakers Park Chan-wook and Bong Joon-ho, as well as visual artists like Boscoe Holder and Roy Decarava as influences. "I tried to not just be influenced by the medium that I'm working in, because I find that it just makes your work feel like an homage to other filmmakers, as opposed to a new thing altogether," said Jusu. "I think if you're being honest, as an artist, as a filmmaker, especially with yourself and the material, whatever style you choose will be timeless," she said.

CONVERSATION WITH WRITER/DIRECTOR NIKYATU JUSU

Describe Aisha in your own words.

Aisha is an observer. She's a woman of few words — one constantly studying and processing the world around her. She's ambitious, focused, cunning, graceful, and somewhat selfish, which is a requisite for the drive necessary to engineer the life she wants.

What's she afraid of, or perhaps more specifically, what is she haunted by?

She's afraid of losing her child, and losing herself. Like most of us, she's afraid of failure because for people like her, failure means suffering, even death. The ubiquitous haunting in *Nanny* is a haunting defined by grief, loss, and systematic obstacles outside of her control.

What specifically did you want to say about motherhood in your debut feature?

Bell Hooks defined our current paradigm as an “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.” In this iteration of our world, though ciswomen of all races are making gains in their respective careers, they are still disproportionately in charge of domestic labor. These burdens are multiplied for women of color and most specifically Black women. Add to this the burden of inequitable health care for expectant mothers and motherhood becomes a real-life horror story in spite of being rapidly lionized as a revered title. We live in a society that claims to love and support mothers, but its actions show otherwise. Patriarchy enslaves us all and our racial/class hierarchy keeps certain women at the bottom of this oppressive totem pole.

Anna Diop is best known for her television work. She undergoes a lot as an actor in this movie, physically and emotionally. Why did you want to cast her as Aisha?

The industry tossed many names on the table — some more ridiculous than others; however, I had my eye on Anna Diop some time ago as an actress who possessed the poise and authenticity I was seeking for my leading lady. Our casting director Kim Coleman was pivotal in facilitating taped auditions and though she presented me with some compelling options, Anna brought a certain gracefulness and genuineness to her audition. She's stunning, but she also understands Aisha at a visceral level, even an empirical level. More superficially I needed an actress with a level of athleticism since she would be thrust into water and tossed around a bit by our supernatural haunting.

Aisha is employed by Amy and Adam, a wealthy New York City couple. Describe them and the world they live in. Amy and Adam are a relatively wealthy Tribeca couple.

They are self-professed liberals, people who believe they are self-aware, with a deep understanding of what it means to be white in America, and in the world. They even dare occasionally to say out loud that they are “white folks,” a brave proclamation in a world that perceives whiteness as an unspoken identifier while the rest of us are racialized. Their friend circle is mostly like them: well-traveled, successful in their respective careers, polished. They have enough token “friends of color” to feel they don't inhabit a vapid white vacuum. Their obstacles are restricted to the baseline: existential crisis, loneliness, depression/mental illness, substance abuse, infidelity...basically conflicts of the human condition devoid of the added burdens of being marginalized and/or poor.

Why was Michelle Monaghan the right fit for Amy?

Michelle's ability to perform and imbue her role with heaping spoonfuls of self-awareness stunned me and made me a stronger director. She was a blessing because Amy could have easily ventured into caricature territory. I'm not interested in depictions of whiteness that feel satirized; I think it's more compelling and effective to portray whiteness in its banality — its

everydayness of microaggressions and cumulative ignorance which become larger systemic issues. Michelle humanized Amy in a way that I hope certain audiences can see themselves within. She's such a smart, curious performer. We discovered new nuances through conversation, deep reading of the text, and (though meager) rehearsal time.

Describe your familiarity with the immigrant community in New York City. Were you thinking about a specific neighborhood for Aisha's immediate world?

For Aisha's immediate world I thought of Harlem, where an entire subsection is actually dubbed Little Senegal. Though I am Sierra Leonean-American and Anna is Senegalese-American, there are some similarities in West African cultures across the board. I was able to tap into that authenticity by leaning into the nuances of Anna's Senegalese culture: food, language (Wolof), francophone-tinged accent, traditional garb, etc...

Nobody is raising their own children in Nanny. Was this something you wanted to explore in the movie?

No one wins in this imperial racist patriarchy. This is what I want people to understand. Inequities ultimately impact us all whether you are closer to the theoretical "front of the line" in this racial/class hierarchy or at the very back of it. America injects us all with this toxic sense of individualism that yanks many of us away from our more communal, village-oriented roots. When the elders are nurtured, they in turn can help nurture younger generations. Everyone chips in to raise the children when the mothers and fathers have to work. The U.S. conditions us to normalize outsourcing child rearing so we can continue to participate in the rat race of capitalism. None of this is healthy and no one thrives — least of all the children.

Nanny is subtle in its approach to on-screen horror, using mounting paranoia and dread. Describe your approach and strategy to placing your scares.

Most of my horror influences are slow-burn international films: Jennifer Kent's *The Babadook*, Lynne Ramsay's *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, Jayro Bustamante's *La Llorona*, Tomas Alfredson's *Let the Right One In*, Takashi Miike's *Audition*, Kim Jee Woon's *A Tale of Two Sisters*...these are a handful of films that inform my horror sensibilities which aren't necessarily always so formulaic with jump scares every x minutes and easily categorized as "traditional American horror."

What I appreciate about these cross-genre horror films is the skill level needed to nurture a rising sense of dread that culminates in horrifying catharsis. One of our collaborators described our film as a "thrumming anxiety" and I think that's a perfect description for what I wanted to convey through Aisha's journey — this pervasive thrumming anxiety one feels navigating spaces never meant for us to thrive within. It's not always about obvious outright violence, it's often about the myriad microscopic ways your humanity is chipped away at, which in turn affects your quality of sleep, which affects your health, which...well, the domino effect is endless. Imagine having to constantly proclaim your life matters. It's all violence.

You also explore and infuse West African folktales in the movie, specifically Anansi the Spider and Mami Wata, which have symbolic resonance. What is your personal experience with these folktales?

I grew up hearing about Anansi the spider superficially and later in life Mami Wata. Both figures have different iterations and names in African Diasporic cultures and indigenous cultures – the trickster figure in particular (Anansi). As I've matured, I've formed an affinity for learning about the ways my ancestors resisted and persisted, pulling from their stories as inspiration in these dark times. They survived more treacherous times for me to be here and I'm intrigued by the magical narratives – true or not – we told ourselves and each other in order to thrive.

What effect does Anansi the Spider and Mami Wata have on Aisha over the course of the movie?

Kathleen serves as our guide helping us to superficially understand the presence of both Mami Wata and Anansi. They are African diasporic figures of resistance using different tools: Anansi is a mischievous influence ready to draw blood if necessary. Mami Wata is more of a seductive, sometimes sinister but cunning presence. I am not even scratching the surface of what these figures truly mean. Both figures inspire Aisha to understand her place in this foreign, racialized system. They also inspire her to step into her inherent power and fight back when necessary rather than be a docile and humble servant. Additionally, they want her to comprehend a prescient message that informs her past, present and future. Time isn't so literal with these figures, nor is the spiritual vs physical realm a concrete binary. We are constantly straddling all of these worlds simultaneously. I am still figuring out how to portray this.

How does Aisha change over the course of this movie?

She steps into a power she always had, a tenaciousness she forgot how to flex. We become beaten down by messaging and imagery that tells us we are less than. This is your fate. I wanted to portray a character who, by divine intervention, remembers she is a warrior.

What did you want to examine or say about race and immigration with this movie?

So many things. Race is a social construct that has us all in a chokehold. I am here because of my immigrant parents. We are a nation of colliding and intersecting human beings from various origins who too often only perceive one another through a lens of artificial identifiers. Senegalese filmmaker Safi Faye said, "As far as I'm concerned, once the film is finished it belongs to the spectators and critics. That's why I don't like interviews." Regardless of my many intentions I hope people who view Nanny become more curious: about their place in the world, about West African Folklore, about the formerly invisible people who live on the periphery of their lives, about their inherent power they simply need to tap into...

ABOUT THE CAST

ANNA DIOP (AISHA)

Anna Diop is a Senegalese-American actress who can next be seen in Nikyatu Jusu's highly-anticipated thriller *Nanny*. She stars as Aisha, an immigrant Nanny, piecing together a new life in New York City while caring for the child of an Upper East Side family, and is forced to confront a concealed truth that threatens to shatter her precarious American Dream. The film, which won the Grand Jury Prize this year at Sundance, is set to premiere theatrically on November 23rd and on Prime Video on December 13th.

On the TV front, Diop is the female lead 'Starfire' in the DC Universe live-action series *Titans* on HBO Max. She also was a series regular on FOX's reboot of *24: Legacy* playing opposite Corey Hawkins.

MICHELLE MONAGHAN (AMY)

With a slate of roles that exemplify her strength and charm, Golden Globe nominated actress Michelle Monaghan brings depth and humanity to each performance.

Monaghan can currently be seen in Netflix's limited-series *Echoes*, where she portrayed identical twins 'Leni' and 'Gina,' who shared a dangerous secret: Since they were children, they have secretly swapped lives, culminating in a double life as adults. She will next be seen in *Nanny*, written, and directed by Nikyatu Jusu.

Upcoming, Monaghan will also be seen in *Spinning Gold*, a biopic about 1970s Casablanca Records chief Neil Bogart, as well as Brad Anderson's *Blood* and *The Price of Admission*, alongside Michael Sheen and produced by Casey Affleck.

She recently wrapped production on Bill Lawrence's Apple TV+ Series *Bad Monkey*, with Vince Vaughn and Jodie Turner-Smith. The series, based on the Carl Hiaasen novel of the same name, tells the story of Andrew Yancy, a one-time detective demoted to restaurant inspector in Southern Florida.

Monaghan's breakout role was in Shane Black's *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*. Monaghan starred opposite Robert Downey Jr. and won rave reviews for her performance in the action adventure. In 2008, Monaghan earned critical acclaim for her performance in the independent feature *Trucker*, which she also executive produced. She starred as 'Diane Ford' - a vivacious young truck driver who leads a carefree life of long-haul trucking, one-night stands, and all-night drinking until her estranged 11-year-old son shows up at her door.

Her other screen credits include Vaughn Stein's *Every Breath You Take*; Zoe Lister-Jones' *The Craft: Legacy*; Sean Woods's *Saint Judy*; Christopher McQuarrie's *Mission Impossible: Fallout* opposite Tom Cruise, in which she reprised her role as 'Julia Meade'; Shawn Christensen's mystery *The Vanishing of Sidney Hall* with Logan Lerman, Elle Fanning, Margaret Qualley and Kyle Chandler; Baran bo Odar's *Sleepless* opposite Jamie Foxx; Peter Berg's *Patriot's Day*, co-starring opposite Mark Wahlberg, and chronicling the events surrounding the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing; Chris Columbus' *Pixels* with Adam Sandler, Peter Dinklage, Kevin James and Josh Gad; Michael Hoffman's drama *The Best of Me* opposite James Marsden; Justin Reardon's *Playing It Cool* opposite Chris Evans; Claudia Myers' critically acclaimed *Fort Bliss*, portraying a veteran of the

war in Afghanistan who, once stateside, struggles to rebuild her relationship with her young son; *Due Date* opposite Robert Downey Jr.; Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere*; Marc Foster's *Machine Gun Preacher* opposite Gerard Butler; the well-received sci-fi thriller *Source Code* directed by Duncan Jones co-starring Jake Gyllenhaal; the box-office hit, *Eagle Eye* co-starring Shia LaBeouf; *Made of Honor* opposite Patrick Dempsey; *The Heartbreak Kid* opposite Ben Stiller; Niki Caro's *North Country* opposite Charlize Theron and Frances McDormand; *Gone Baby Gone* opposite Casey Affleck and Morgan Freeman; and J.J. Abrams' *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol* opposite Tom Cruise.

In television, Monaghan starred in Netflix's geo-political thriller, *Messiah*, as well as Hulu's drama series *The Path*, alongside Aaron Paul and Hugh Dancy. Prior to that, she co-starred in the HBO drama *True Detective* opposite Matthew McConaughey and Woody Harrelson. The eight-episode anthology was penned by Nic Pizzolatto and directed by Cary Fukunaga. For her portrayal, Monaghan was nominated for a Golden Globe for her role as 'Maggie Hart.'

Originally from Iowa, Monaghan currently resides in Los Angeles with her husband, daughter, and son.

MORGAN SPECTOR (ADAM)

Morgan Spector can currently be seen in the new HBO series *The Gilded Age* from Downton Abbey creator Julian Fellowes, starring alongside Carrie Coon, Christine Baranski and Cynthia Nixon.

Spector received critical acclaim, including a Critics Choice Nomination, for his work in David Simon's *The Plot Against America*, opposite Winona Ryder, John Turturro and Zoe Kazan. Additional TV credits include *Homeland*, (Showtime) and *Boardwalk Empire* (HBO), as well as leads on *Pearson* (USA), *The Mist* (Spike) and *Allegiance* (NBC).

On the big screen, his credits include *Nanny*, which was awarded the Grand Jury Prize in the US Dramatic Competition at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival, *A Vigilante* opposite Olivia Wilde, the relationship drama *Permission* opposite Dan Stevens and Rebecca Hall, and a turn as Sylvester Stallone in director Philippe Falardeau's biopic *Chuck*, the true story of boxer Chuck Wepner, who inspired the film series *Rocky*. Spector can next be seen starring opposite Kiera Knightley in 20th Century's *Boston Strangler* written and directed by Matt Ruskin.

Spector is also featured in Audible's upcoming scripted podcast, *The Miranda Obsession*.

In addition, he directed the short *Mother!!* for the short film collection *With/in: Volume 1* which had its premiere at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival. He also produced the documentary *The Big Scary 'S' Word*.

On stage, Spector made his Broadway debut in 2010 in Gregory Mosher's Tony Award-winning revival of Arthur Miller's *View from the Bridge* starring opposite Liev Schreiber and Scarlett Johansson. He was later nominated for a Drama Desk for his performance in the New Group's production of Erika Sheffer's *Russian Transport* starring Janeane Garofalo. Other significant stage performances include *Harvey* and *Machinal* on Broadway, *Ironbound* (Rattlestick), and *Incognito*

(MTC). Spector was last seen onstage off-Broadway in Clare Lizzimore's *Animal* starring opposite Rebecca Hall at the Atlantic Theatre.

A graduate of Reed College and the prestigious American Conservatory Theater, Spector lives in New York with his wife and daughter.

SINQUA WALLS (MALIK)

Having worked steadily in the industry for over a decade, Sinqua Walls has made a name for himself by taking on dynamic and multi-layered characters in many of today's groundbreaking projects.

Sinqua will next star as the Co-Lead of the 20th Century Studios Reboot of *White Man Can't Jump*, produced by Kenya Barris and to be directed by Calmatic. The film will offer a new take on Ron Shelton's 1992 sports comedy, starring Woody Harrelson, Wesley Snipes and Rosie Perez, which saw Black and white basketball hustlers join forces to double their chances of winning money on the street courts and in a basketball tournament. Jack Harlow is stepping into the role originated by Harrelson, with Walls taking on Snipes'.

Sinqua's previous two Films - *Nanny & The Blackening* - Will both be featured in the prestigious lineup of the 2022 Toronto International Film Festival. *Nanny* - written and directed by Nikyatu Jusu, debuted at the 2022 Sundance Film Festival & received the honorable U.S. Dramatic Competition Grand Jury Award. The film will be distributed via Blumhouse and Amazon Studios at the end of November. Sinqua's other project in the TIFF lineup - *The Blackening* - was Directed by Tim Story and written and produced by Tracy Oliver. Previous to these projects, he starred and executive produced the Independent feature film *Mending the Lane* opposite Brian Cox. The story follows a young soldier (Walls), injured in Afghanistan, who arrives at a VA hospital and meets a Vietnam veteran (Cox) at the facility who teaches him to fly fish, hoping it will help the young man deal with his physical and emotional trauma.

Walls is currently developing the film adaptation of Nelson George's nove *One Woman Short* to star and produce with Jason Berman on behalf of Mandalay Pictures, as well as Jamie Foxx and Datari Turner.

In Television, Sinqua previously starred in *At That Age* from Malcolm D. Lee and Debra Martin Chase. He anchored *American Soul*, in which he has transitioned into a leading man with his portrayal of the legendary and infamous Don Cornelius. The series follows the creation of the influential African American cultural cornerstone of the 70's and 80's, "Soul Train," and is inspired by the personal trials and professional successes of the young, ambitious and troubled Cornelius.

Additional credits include starring in Netflix's *Resort to Love* - Produced by Alicia Keys, and *Otherhood* opposite Angela Bassett, Patricia Arquette and Felicity Huffman. Walls starred in Starz hit series *POWER* for two seasons. The show is one of the highest rated on cable television and the network's most successful project to date. In 2017, Walls was seen in Academy Award winning filmmaker Clint Eastwood's *15:17 to Paris*. Walls also starred in *The Breaks* for VH1. Walls made a memorable turn as Jamarcus Hall in NBC's Emmy winning, acclaimed drama *Friday Night Lights*. In 2016, Walls was handpicked by David O. Russell to appear as one of the faces of Russell's artistic campaign for Prada alongside Frieda Pinto, Connie Britton and John Krasinski.

ROSE DECKER (ROSE)

Rose Decker began her career as a toddler in print modeling, runway (New York Fashion Week) and TV commercials. At four years old, Rose played "Kenzie" on HBO's hit series *Mare of Easttown*. She soon went on to play "Rose" in the Sundance winning film, *Nanny*. Rose has guest starred on season 9 of NBC's *The Blacklist*, will appear on an episode of *The Late Show* with Stephen Colbert as well as season 4 of *Servant* on Apple TV+. Rose was recently cast in another feature film, currently in production. Rose Decker lives in Malvern, Pennsylvania where she is a first grade student. She enjoys participating in local live theater through SALT Performing Arts, doing gymnastics and the silks. She has two older brothers and enjoys sports, animals and outdoor adventures. Represented by Nouveaux Talent Management in NY and Reinhard in PA.

LESLIE UGGAMS (KATHLEEN)

Leslie Uggams is a Tony and Emmy Award-winning actress and singer whose career has brought her from Harlem (The Apollo Theater) to Broadway (*Hallelujah, Baby!*), the big screen (*Deadpool*, *Skyjacked*) to television (*Empire*, *The Leslie Uggams Show*). Perhaps best known for her stirring portrayal of Kizzy in the landmark TV mini-series Alex Haley's *Roots* (Critics Choice Award, Emmy and Golden Globe nominations), Leslie has performed to critical and popular acclaim ever since her first professional appearances at the age of nine at the famed Apollo Theater in New York City. There she opened for such musical legends as Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, and Dinah Washington. Now, after seven decades on stage and screen, Leslie is a legend in her own right. She is a past member of the Board of Directors of the Apollo, and she holds Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degrees from the University of Connecticut and the University of Michigan. She is also the recipient of an American Artist Award from Arena Stage in Washington, DC and a 2021 inductee into the Theater Hall of Fame.

Leslie recently finished filming the feature length films *Nanny* and *Dotty and Soul* and recurred in the limited pandemic comedy/horror series *The Bite* by Robert and Michelle King. She has also voiced characters for the upcoming Netflix animated series *My Dad*, *the Bounty Hunter*, the Disney animated series *Minnie's Bow-Tunes*, and *The Family Guy*. She can be seen as Blind Al in the blockbuster 20th Century Fox films *Deadpool* and *Deadpool2* opposite Ryan Reynolds and continues to recur as Mama Reynolds in *New Amsterdam*. Other prominent TV appearances include *Empire*; *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, *Nurse Jackie*; *The Good Wife*; *Memphis Beat*; and *NYC 22*.

On Broadway Leslie made her stunning musical theater debut starring in *Hallelujah, Baby!* earning both Tony and Theater World awards. Since then, she has starred on Broadway in *Blues in the Night*, *Her First Roman* with Richard Kiley, *Jerry's Girls*, *Anything Goes* at the Lincoln Center Theatre (also the first national tour), *King Headley II* with Brian Stokes Mitchell (Tony Award nomination), *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and *On Golden Pond* opposite James Earl Jones. Off-Broadway Leslie has won Audelco Awards for *The Old Settler*, *Keb Mo's blues musical Thunder Knocking on the Door*, and *First Breeze of Summer* at the acclaimed Signature Theater. Favorite regional roles include *Mame*, *A Little Night Music*, *The Rink*, *Into the Woods*, *Master Class*, *Call Me Madam*, *Blue*, *Hello, Dolly!* and the national tour of *Guys and Dolls*.

In addition, Leslie has toured nationally, performing to sold-out audiences, with her autobiographical one-woman musical *Uptown/Downtown* (LA Drama Critics Circle Award, NAACP Theatre Award, IRNE Award, Broadway World People's Choice Award) which chronicles her extraordinary career in stories and song. From New York to Boston and Los

Angeles, critics have raved, calling Leslie “dazzling,” “indefatigable,” and “delectable!” Leslie also made theater history by becoming the first African American actress to portray the iconic character of Mama Rose in Connecticut Repertory Theatre’s acclaimed production of *Gypsy*. She also starred in the Encores! presentation of *Pipe Dream* at New York City Center; and in the world premiere of *Stormy Weather: The Lena Horne Story* (Ovation nomination) at the Pasadena Playhouse in California, where she broke the all-time house attendance record.

Leslie’s still vibrant television career, which began at the age of six portraying Ethel Waters’ niece on the TV series *Beulah*, spans decades. As a teenager she famously won a \$12,500 college scholarship on *Name That Tune*, and as a regular on *Sing Along with Mitch* she was the first African American performer to be featured on a weekly national primetime television series. Other early guest appearances included *Your Show of Shows*, *The Milton Berle Show*, *The Arthur Godfrey Show*, and *The Ed Sullivan Show*. In 1970 she hosted her own primetime variety series, *The Leslie Uggams Show*. Later starring roles included her award-winning portrayal in Alex Haley’s *Roots*, the miniseries *Backstairs at the White House*, the ABC-TV movie *Sizzle*, the HBO special *Christmas at Radio City Music Hall*, and her Emmy-winning duties as co-host of the NBC-TV series *Fantasy*.

While a student at the Julliard School in New York, Leslie released the first of 10 solo albums she was to record for Columbia Records. Later she signed with Atlantic Records. Her newest CDs are *Leslie Uggams: Uptown/Downtown*; *On My Way to You: The Songs of Marilyn and Alan Bergman*; and *Wishing You a Happy New Year* with the Curtis McKonly Orchestra. She can also be heard on the cast album of *Pipe Dream*.

In concert Leslie has toured with Peter Nero and Mel Torme; performed at the Hollywood Bowl in *Jerry Herman’s Broadway*; and appeared as a guest soloist with numerous symphony orchestras across the country, including The National Symphony Orchestra, The Cincinnati Pops, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and The Rhode Island Symphony. In addition, Leslie performed before 300,000 people during the Memorial Day Concert on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol which was also broadcast live by PBS to millions of viewers nationwide.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

NIKYATU JUSU (WRITER/DIRECTOR)

Nikyatu Jusu is an independent writer, director, and Assistant Professor in Film & Video. Jusu’s short vampire film *Suicide by Sunlight* made its debut at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, garnering a prolific festival run. *Nanny* is Jusu’s screenwriting and directing feature film debut and was selected for: the 2019 Sundance Institute Creative Producing Lab, the 2019 IFP Project Forum, and the 2020 Sundance Screenwriter’s, and Director’s Labs. Additionally, *Nanny* was one of 35 projects selected for the 2020 Creative Capital Awards, and shortlisted for The Black List 2020. Jusu is the second Black woman director and *Nanny* is the first horror film to win the Sundance Grand Jury Prize (US Dramatic) 2022. She is repped at M88 and CAA.

NIKKIA MOULTERIE (PRODUCER)

Nikkia Moulterie is a creative producer born and raised in New York City. She is a 2019 Sundance Institute Creative Producing Fellow and Silverman Honoree. She co-produced the premiere season of the Peabody Award-winning *Random Acts of Flyness* for MVMT / HBO. In

2019, she produced *Suicide by Sunlight* with writer/director Nikyatu Jusu, which premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival and continued a successful run at BAMcinemaFEST, BFI London Film Fest, MoMA's Black Women Film Conference, AFI and more. Jusu and Moulterie more recently collaborated on the feature film *Nanny* - a 2020 Sundance Screenwriting / Directors / Catalyst Lab project premiering at Sundance 2022. In addition, her work as a producer also includes projects at ABC News, MTV, T Magazine, Nike, Louis Vuitton, as well as numerous works in the commercial and branded content world. She is currently a Senior Producer at the Estee Lauder Companies.

DANIELA TAPLIN LUNDBERG (PRODUCER)

Producer Daniela Taplin Lundberg is the Founder of Stay Gold Features, an independent film finance and production company. Her recent producing credits include Nikyatu Jusu's Sundance award winner *Nanny*, starring Anna Diop and Michelle Monaghan, as well as Nikole Beckwith's *Together Together* starring Ed Helms and Patti Harrison. Under Stay Gold Lundberg also produced Kasi Lemmons' *Harriet*, starring Cynthia Erivo in an Oscar-nominated role, Alma Har'els' *Honey Boy* which was nominated for four Indie Spirit Awards, and *Joe Bell*, starring Mark Wahlberg and Connie Britton.

Prior to launching Stay Gold, Lundberg was a co-founding partner of Red Crown Productions where she produced Cary Fukunaga's *Beasts of No Nation* and Michael Showalter's *Hello, My Name is Doris*. She was previously a partner at Plum Pictures where she produced over 20 films, including Golden Globe Best Picture winner *The Kids Are All Right*.

She was named to *Variety's* 2020 Women's Impact Report and is the recipient of the 2020 Hollywood Critics Association Producer of the Decade award. Lundberg is a member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as well as of YPO (Young President's Organization). She is a graduate of Princeton University and lives in Connecticut with her husband and three children.

RINA YANG (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Rina is a director of photography who was accepted into the British Society of Cinematographers as a first Asian woman ever, and she was also selected for the BAFTA Breakthrough 2020, and she was the first female DOP to win a cinematography award at the British Arrows, as well as being nominated for a best cinematographer in fiction at the BAFTA Cymru Awards 19', making history in both commercials and narrative categories.

Recent projects: *Euphoria* season2 ep6 for HBO/A24, *Nanny* (Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner), *Top Boy S3* for Netflix, *Sitting in Limbo* (BAFTA winner) for BBC1, *Flint Strong* for MGM studios, *All Too Well* for Taylor Swift (VMA winner).

IAN TAKAHASHI (UNDERWATER DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Ian S. Takahashi, began his career as an intern under Director Francis F. Coppola. After college Ian moved to Los Angeles where he trained under Academy Award winning Cinematographer John Toll, ASC, (*Braveheart*, *Legends of the Fall*) and began a decade long mentorship under acclaimed Underwater Cinematographer Mike Thomas (*Thin Red Line*, *Cast Away*).

As an Underwater Director of Photography, Ian has worked with clients like Apple, Nike, Ralph Lauren on their commercial campaigns, Beyoncé & Harry Styles on their music videos, as well as all the Major Networks and streaming platforms for TV shows, including an upcoming *Star*

Wars series. Ian's feature film work includes second unit work for Ron Howard, Underwater DP *The Suicide Squad* for James Gunn / Warner Brothers and *Lost City* for Paramount.

Married to Corinna Vistan-Takahashi, a retired Marvel Studios Executive, they split their time between the US and Asia while raising their son.

JONATHAN GUGGENHEIM (PRODUCTION DESIGNER)

Jonathan Guggenheim discovered his affection for design while attending University of North Carolina at Wilmington. It was there he received a BA in Communication Studies with a concentration in visual media and performance of literature. His involvement in theatre allowed him to experiment with set design, prop fabrication, and scenic painting. He began working as an Art Director in the film industry on projects such as *Restless City*, *Martha Marcy May Marlene*, *Loving*, *Leave No Trace*, *Boy Erased* and most recently on the reboot of *Scream* as well as *The Black Phone*. His foray into Production Design has included the films *To The Stars*, *Wild Indian*, and the forthcoming thriller, *Nanny*.

CHARLESE ANTOINETTE (COSTUME DESIGNER)

Over the past decade, Charlese Antoinette has established herself as one of the most talented costume designers in the business. Her recent work includes the critically acclaimed film, *Judas and the Black Messiah*, for which she received a 2021 Costume Designers Guild Award nomination. Her personal fashion influences range from 1969, the afro-futurism of the 70's and Gianni Versace's 90's to her passion for travel and exploring new worlds in creating groundbreaking, vibrant contemporary and period costumes.

Over the last ten years Charlese has costume designed ten films, among them, the Spike Lee-produced *See You Yesterday*, *Vincent N Roxxy* and *Little Boxes*, all of which premiered at the TriBeCa Film Festival. Additional films include George Tillman's *The Inevitable Defeat of Mister & Pete* and writer/director Shaka King's *Newlyweeds*, both of which premiered at Sundance in 2013, and earned King a Film Independent Spirit Award.

Her stunning work can also be seen on the small screen in the upcoming second season of Terence Nance's Peabody Award-winning *Random Acts of Flyness* for HBO, as well as Kenya Barris's original sketch comedy *Astronomy Club* and the internationally lauded *Raising Dion*, both from Netflix.

RISHA ROX (MAKE-UP DEPARTMENT HEAD/SFX MAKE-UP HEAD)

Risha Rox is a New York and Los Angeles based Makeup Department Head for Film & Television. She followed an unconventional path towards her career, originally pulled onto film projects for her skills as a fine artist and bodypainter. She became captivated by the magic of cinematic storytelling and the opportunity to collaborate, using her talents in novel ways. She imbues her work with a passionate approach to light, color and material.

Risha has worked on various fascinating NY projects, including: *Nanny* (Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner, 2022), HBO's *Random Acts of Flyness* (Terence Nance's Peabody Award winning show, for which she recently completed Season 2) and *The Independent* (an upcoming Political Thriller on which she expanded her repertoire by acting as personal MU to Jodie Turner Smith).

When in Los Angeles, Risha enjoys celebrity grooming in addition to her work in Film & TV. She also just completed a feature film produced by Darren Aronofsky's Protozoa Pictures, directed by Jack Berger and starring David Schwimmer, Gaby Hoffman and Dominic Fike.