**Newfest New Voice Filmmaker Grant Application**

**Artist Statement for Filmmaking Grant Application**

As a filmmaker, I am driven by my commitment to exploring stories from marginalized communities. In 2019, I graduated with Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and Globalization Studies. Having spent extended amounts of time across different countries, and becoming fluent in other languages, I developed a deep interest in how migration—both physical and metaphysical—shapes individuals and societies. This perspective on history and culture, combined with my own identity as a gay man and the son of a Nicaraguan mother, has given me a unique lens through which I approach storytelling. I’ve always felt like an outsider, which has sparked my desire to tell stories of people navigating multiple identities, cultures, and systems of oppression.

My academic journey led me to pursue a Master’s in Media Studies and Production, where I discovered the potential of filmmaking as a means of creating impactful, socially relevant narratives. While my experience directing is limited, the Producing and Directing class I took sparked my passion for the behind-the-scenes work that goes into making a film. I was inspired by the creative work of my other classmates, as well as the collaborative process, and it motivated me to dive deeper into filmmaking. Soon enough, I’ve realized that all it takes to begin a career in filmmaking, is *ambition* and *curiosity*.

My feature script, *Metamorphosis*, is my first written script and is deeply personal. It explores my experiences with coming out, navigating the gay community, and dealing with the trauma of sexual assault. Through this script, I aim to highlight the issues of alcohol and substance abuse, self-esteem, and sexual violence within the LGBTQ+ community. These issues are often neglected, yet they are essential to understanding the challenges many queer individuals face. Studies show that LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately affected by these problems, which my script argues is the result of deeply rooted homophobic societal norms. Applying to the New Voices Filmmaker Grant would help me fund this endeavour, and turn my script into a feature film.

Filmmaking, to me, is a tool for social change. I remain inspired by various films (*Incendies, Anora, The Shape of Water, Schindler’s List, Speak*) that challenge social norms and dare to engage in uncomfortable conversations. By telling stories that confront and challenge harmful attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people, I hope to foster greater empathy and awareness. *Metamorphosis* is an intimate exploration of one man’s emotional journey, but it also reflects the broader, systemic issues facing many in the queer community. My goal is for audiences to engage with the film on a personal level, leaving with a deeper understanding of the complex realities LGBTQ+ people experience even after coming out of the closet.

My approach to LGBTQ+ storytelling is grounded in authenticity. Representation is important, but it’s also important to create stories that reflect the full spectrum of queer experiences—stories that acknowledge both the joys and the struggles, including mental health challenges, addiction, and trauma. Through *Metamorphosis* and future projects, I hope to contribute to a more nuanced, compassionate understanding of the LGBTQ+ experience, fostering meaningful conversations that can lead to greater social change.

As I continue to grow as a filmmaker, my focus will remain on amplifying marginalized voices and telling stories that encourage empathy, challenge harmful stereotypes, and ultimately contribute to a more inclusive world.

**Statement of Intent**

By applying to the New Voices Filmmaker Grant, I hope to bring my film to life that explores the life of a man impacted by homophobia and sexual violence, using the lens of his experience as a gay man and exploring the resulting dynamics on his life. If selected for this grant, I would use the funding to advance my film script, *metamorphosis.*, through key stages of development and production. The funds would be allocated as follows:

1. **Pre-Production and Script Development (July - December 2025)**: The initial phase would focus on finalizing the script. I plan to work with professional script consultants to refine the narrative and ensure it authentically portrays the LGBTQ+ experience, particularly issues of substance abuse and sexual violence.
2. **Casting and Crew Recruitment (January - February 2026)**: I will use the grant to cast talented actors who resonate with the story and recruit a skilled, diverse crew. Collaboration with a director of photography and production designer will be crucial to visualizing the film’s emotional tone and atmosphere.
3. **Production (March - April 2026)**: The funding will support the logistics of production, including securing locations, permits, and equipment. I will ensure the production is both efficient and true to the emotional core of the film.
4. **Post-Production and Distribution (May - June 2026)**: In the final phase, funds will be allocated to editing, sound design, and festival submissions. The goal is to have a polished film ready for film festivals, setting the stage for distribution and future visibility.

This grant will be instrumental in creating a film that amplifies LGBTQ+ voices and raises awareness of critical issues such as trauma and self-acceptance. By the end of the grant period, I hope to have a completed film, ready to spark important conversations and engage audiences.