

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL 2020 CALL FOR ENTRIES

**EPIC STORYTELLING
HAS A LONG HISTORY.
YOUR TURN.**

THE 27TH ANNUAL AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL & WRITERS CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 22–29, 2020

LET'S MAKE SOME HISTORY

Storytelling began 44,000 years ago on a cave wall in Sulawesi with the tale of a pig and buffalo. And here we are today, about to celebrate your soon-to-be entry as your contribution to storytelling's long, revered history. In just the last few years, it's astonishing how many original, new voices have emerged at the Austin Film Festival – and how many filmmaking leaders are here to offer history-making opportunities to aspiring writers.

That's precisely why for 27 years, we've invited the most generous, gifted, and successful mentors to uplift and inspire courageous storytellers like you. So, don't be shy. In this age of exponentially increasing content, there's never been a more opportune time for writers and filmmakers to get discovered. And whether it's your first script or your 100th, an incredible new journey begins when you enter. From our script readers' comments on every submission to personalized workshops, AFF is the Festival that keeps propelling you forward. So, here we go. Curtain up. A pantheon of great storytellers awaits you.

Competition Deadlines

FEATURE SCREENPLAY

Early March 27 Price **\$45**
Regular April 17 Price **\$60**
Late May 15 Price **\$70**

SHORT SCREENPLAY & TELEPLAY

Early March 27 Price **\$35**
Regular April 17 Price **\$50**
Late May 15 Price **\$60**

FILM COMPETITION

Early March 27 Price **\$50**
Regular May 22 Price **\$60**
Late June 26 Price **\$75**
Extended July 6 Price **\$85**

PRODUCED DIGITAL SERIES

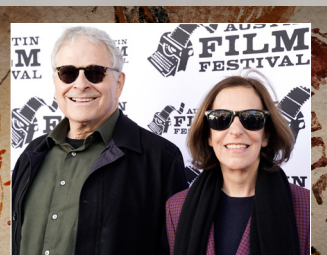
Early March 27 Price **\$35**
Regular May 22 Price **\$45**
Late June 26 Price **\$50**
Extended July 6 Price **\$55**

SCRIPTED DIGITAL SERIES

Early March 27 Price **\$35**
Regular April 17 Price **\$40**
Late May 15 Price **\$45**
Extended July 6 Price **\$50**

FICTION PODCAST SCRIPT

Early April 17 Price **\$20**
Regular May 15 Price **\$30**
Late July 6 Price **\$40**



Lawrence and Meg Kasdan attending their world premiere of *Last Week at Ed's* at the 26th Annual Austin Film Festival

"Austin Film Festival is the best festival in the world for writers. I got my start at AFF, first as a second-rounder, then as a finalist. Austin launched my career – from placing in the contests, which led directly to getting representation, to, a couple of years later, getting staffed and my career taking off in earnest. I can honestly say I look forward to returning to the Austin Film Festival each and every year."

Jimmy Mosqueda, writer of *Legacies* and *Schooled*



Panelists Ayanna Floyd Davis, David Benioff, & D.B. Weiss recording a live episode of *Scriptnotes* at AFF 26

"AFF truly cares about its entrants. I've never placed in a competition where they genuinely want you to keep in touch and utilize them as a resource as you endeavor throughout your writing career. AFF really cares about its writers, their work, and their careers. They are in it for the long haul and it's so refreshing and encouraging to have their support for life!"

Robert Axelrod, 2018 Script Competition Finalist

FILM COMPETITION

You've got a story that can't wait.

At Austin Film Festival, our mission is to give storytellers the ultimate platform for sharing their unique voice – a true chance at getting discovered by the very best in the industry. By submitting your work to AFF, you're now part of a welcoming and dynamic community where the power of a well-told story stands above all.

Here are just a few bonus features AFF entrants appreciate:

- Filmmaker roundtables offer an exclusive chance for those with films in the festival to network with industry insiders you can't access anywhere else.
- Winners receive our notorious El Bronzo trophy and a sizable chunk of change. Cash is nice but just imagine holding a sturdy, 5-lb. bronze typewriter statuette next to today's best filmmakers like Sarah Green, David Benioff & D.B. Weiss, and Ali LeRoi.

Film Categories

- Narrative Feature
- Documentary Feature
- Narrative Short
- Documentary Short
- Narrative Student Short
- Dark Matters Feature
- Animated Short
- Comedy Vanguard Feature



**Siqi Song, writer/
director 2018 AFF
Animated Short
SISTER, 2020
Oscar® nominee**

"The recognition from Austin Film Festival definitely brought the film into the spotlight and gave it more opportunities to be seen as it was shared in many other film festivals. Attending the Austin Film Festival was one of my best film festival experiences."

SCRIPT COMPETITION

Storytellers wanted.

Producers are looking for you. Actors are counting on you. Directors can't wait to collaborate with you. That's the beauty of the Austin Film Festival – so many of the industry's top stars are all HERE, waiting for you. Ready for your pitch-perfect words, provocative characters, and distinctive tale to unfold. And if last year's number of success stories is any indication, 2020 could be your best year yet. Well, are you really going to keep everyone waiting? FADE IN...



**Dan Petrie, Jr., Christopher Corte, and Rick Dugdale
at the 2019 Awards Luncheon**

Red carpet treatment with every entry.

Your obsession is now our obsession. Once you enter AFF, you're a part of our family and that means we've got your back even AFTER you submit with these extra perks.

- All entrants receive FREE Reader Comments. As an added bonus, Second Rounders and above (roughly the top 20%) receive further comments.
- Second Rounders and above have the opportunity to participate in exclusive panels at AFF with topics on finding representation, demystifying the development process, and improving your first ten script pages. And then there's the incredibly popular Roundtable Sessions where advancing writers meet face-to-face with agents, managers, writers, and other industry professionals.
- All entrants receive registration discounts for the Conference while those who advance in the competition are afforded great discounts the higher they place.
- Enjoy interactive opportunities like our Industry Lunches in 2019 where Second Rounders wined and dined with Bill Broyles and writers like Shane Black. We also have our Script Reading Workshops where selected scripts from the Competition are read aloud and discussed in a personalized setting during the Conference.
- Semifinalist/Finalist loglines and contact information will be included in the annual Producers Book distributed to all AFF panelists plus 700+ agents, managers, producers, and other industry professionals.

The Enderby Entertainment Award

Returning for another year to offer the winner, with a script that has an original concept and distinctive voice that can be produced under \$10 million, the opportunity to be mentored by Rick Dugdale and Daniel Petrie, Jr..

HUMANITAS Originals Award

The second annual HUMANITAS Originals Award highlights scripts that examine what it means to be a fully realized individual in a world struggling with racism, sexism, ageism, poverty, and a widening political divide. The winner will receive a \$5,000 prize and the finalists will be given the opportunity to meet with representatives from HUMANITAS during the 2020 Austin Film Festival.

"The Austin Film Festival is true to their word – this IS the writers festival. AFF dedicates so much time and resources so the focus stays on the writer. It's that attention which led me to signing with my managers at Lit Entertainment. Austin is the spotlight writers need."

Christopher Corte, 2019 Sci-Fi Feature Screenplay, Enderby Entertainment, and Josephson Entertainment Award Winner

Our Esteemed Judges

You've admired their films. You've dreamed of catching their attention. And now their eyes and ears are all yours. AFF judges include professional writers and representatives from major studios and production companies seeking the deep talent they know AFF attracts. Last year's Semifinalist judges included representatives from Circle of Confusion, Paradigm Agency, Lit Entertainment, Nickelodeon, Kaplan/Perrone Entertainment, Energy Entertainment, APA, United Talent Agency, Creative Artists Agency, William Morris Entertainment, Sony Pictures Animation, and many more. Finalist Round judges consist of only established writers and, in 2019, included Gary Whitta, Paula Pell, Nicole Perlman, Amy Berg, Sofia Alvarez, and Christina Hodson among others.

Capri Residency Fellowship

The Capri Fellowship Residency hopes to provide a place where writers can find their voice and tell their most compelling stories. The winner of the Drama Feature Screenplay Award will be provided the opportunity to stay at the Capri Residency in Marfa, Texas for 2 weeks (stay based on Capri Residency availability and must be scheduled from November 2020 – December 2021).

Josephson Entertainment Screenwriting Fellowship

Acclaimed producer, Barry Josephson, has been a longtime supporter of AFF since the very first festival in 1994 when he optioned the winning script from the Screenplay Competition. For a third wonderful year, Barry will present the "Josephson Entertainment Screenwriting Fellowship" which provides a one-on-one mentorship for the writers of two scripts – one feature script and one teleplay pilot – selected from the Final Round of the 2020 Screenplay Competition.

Rooster Teeth's Fellowship

We are excited to announce our second annual Rooster Teeth Fellowship Award. Rooster Teeth will offer a one-on-one mentorship for the writer(s) of the winning fellowship script and they will choose another writer to develop an original concept in conjunction with Rooster Teeth.

Not ready to submit? Try our Coverage Program!

AFF's Coverage Program provides a detailed constructive evaluation of your script for \$105 (feature script) or \$85 (teleplays and shorts). That's a small fee for a potential life-changing return on your investment. The final Competition entry deadlines are May 15 so, with a turnaround time of 60 days or less, this script coverage will still give you enough time for feedback before entering. Submit your coverage request at www.austinfilmfestival.com.

FICTION PODCAST COMPETITION

Now in its fourth thrilling year, our Fiction Podcast Script Competition continues to see extraordinary growth and interest! The podcast industry has very real, immediate opportunities for all storytellers – while screenwriters line up waiting for the Hollywood gates to open, fiction podcasting provides an alternative door for writers everywhere – and the door is wide open!

The best part? No need to start from scratch. If you have a play, teleplay, or screenplay, you're almost there! With a little tweaking, your podcast script can quickly be your new calling card. You've got limitless opportunities to launch new stories with this unique chance to get your work in front of film industry leaders. Last year's judges included representatives from Authentic and QCODE as well as the creators behind the hit podcasts *The Bright Sessions* and *Sandra*.

PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

Our Playwriting Competition returns for an exciting fourth year as we give writers across all mediums well-earned exposure. Unlike other playwriting competitions, AFF offers playwrights broader access to successful writers and professionals in related writing fields. Last year's judges included established playwrights and screenwriters like Sofia Alvarez, Chisa Hutchinson, and Eisa Davis as well as representatives from Samuel French among others.

For those mastering the art and craft of stage drama, this competition offers a major step forward. Plays advancing to the Final Round will have readings during the Conference. Further, advancing playwrights will have access to exclusive panels, workshops, roundtables, and unique networking opportunities with professionals in theatre, film, and television.

PRODUCED & SCRIPTED DIGITAL SERIES COMPETITION

As episodic content grows and diversifies, AFF has expanded its Digital Series Competition to include separate entries for both Produced and Scripted submissions. We're looking to discover and promote serial storytellers who can grip an audience with their unique voice and innovative narrative approach. Filmmakers and screenwriters can submit the first one to three episodes of their series, (less than 30 minutes or 30 pages in total). Semifinalists will be required to fill out a treatment form from AFF about how the series will further develop. Past judges have included representatives from Warner Bros, New Form Digital, Rooster Teeth and Powderkeg Media among others.

"AFF provides a very supportive, inspiring environment and community. The sheer cosmic density formed by such a well-curated mingling of minds, will leave you running toward your desk ready to create. AFF proved to be a wonderful creative spark!"

Par Parekh, creator 2019 Digital Series *The Happy*

PREVIOUS PANELISTS INCLUDED

David Benioff & D.B. Weiss
Creators – *Game of Thrones*

Meg LeFauve
Writer – *Inside Out, Captain Marvel*

Liz Flahive & Carly Mensch
Creators, *GLOW*

Lawrence Kasdan
Writer/Director – *Body Heat*
Writer – *The Empire Strikes Back*

Lulu Wang
Writer/Director – *The Farewell*

AND MANY MORE
Stay tuned for 2020 Panelist Announcements



GLOW co-creators Carly Mensch and Liz Flahive discussing their craft at the Annual Writers Conference

All speakers and events are based on permitting schedules and are subject to change and/or cancellation without notice. Panelists are added on an ongoing basis.

Visit www.austinfilmfestival.com for the full list and daily updates.

Competition Rules

General Rules – All Competitions

1. Once an entry payment has been processed we cannot provide a refund. If a payment is disputed, the account holder may be subject to any fees.
2. All submissions must be accompanied by the appropriate submission fee PER ENTRY and if submitting by mail, a completed entry form including authors' original signatures. Please do not send a photocopy of your signature. Make checks or money orders payable to "Austin Film Festival." Only US money orders will be accepted.
3. Submissions must be the original work of the applicant(s). Neither the Festival nor its jurists investigate or attest to the authenticity of an applicant's statement of authorship or rights.
4. If a submission involves two or more writers as applicants, the monetary prize and any reimbursements will be divided equally among them and only one Typewriter Award will be provided.
5. Awards are based on overall merit of the entries. Judges reserve the right not to grant an award.
6. AFF reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject or disqualify any ineligible entries, without a refund.
7. Selected Scripts, Films, and Plays and Winners:
 - AFF has no obligation (other than as stated in these rules or on our website) to disclose any of the following information: i) identities of readers, screeners, or judges; ii) notes, feedback, or information relating to the submitted material; and/or iii) details regarding the submission review or selection process.
 - Except as explicitly stated, no representations or guarantees are made regarding the feedback or comments provided, or the quality thereof. The opinions of the readers, screeners, or judges are their own and do not reflect the opinions of AFF. AFF explicitly disclaims any liability or responsibility for any comments, notes, or opinions expressed about a submission, whether by AFF or by its readers, judges, and sponsors.
 - Winners will be announced on October 24, 2020. The judges' decision is final.
 - Winners receiving cash prizes are solely responsible for payment of all applicable local, state, and federal taxes.

Screenplay, Teleplay, and Fiction Podcast Competitions

1. All feature screenplays/teleplays/shorts/fiction podcasts (collectively, "Scripts") submitted must be in English.
2. The Screenplay, Teleplay, and Fiction Podcast Competitions are only open to writers who do not currently earn a living writing for film or television. TV staff writers are still eligible to submit.
3. Scripts must not have been optioned or sold prior to October 24, 2020. Applicants must notify Austin Film Festival ("AFF" or the "Festival") of any changes in status following submission.
4. Scripts that have reached the Semifinalist level or above in previous years within any of the Austin Film Festival Competitions are not eligible for resubmission.
5. The Teleplay Competition welcomes spec scripts for any currently airing network or cable program AND original pilot scripts. In order for spec scripts to be eligible for consideration, the program must not be canceled prior to the start of the current television season (September 2019). Specs for new programs must have a series premiere date no later than May 2020. Any ineligible spec script will be disqualified and no refund will be provided.
6. No show bibles, treatments, or reality show formats will be accepted for the Teleplay Competition.
7. Applicants may submit more than one Script in any chosen category. Each entry requires an application, payment, and script (excluding the Enderby Entertainment Award, Horror Award, and Sci-Fi Award, in which only one script is necessary – applies to Screenplay Competition only).
8. Returns and Acknowledgments:
 - Scripts will not be returned under any circumstances.
 - Please include a self-addressed, stamped postcard for each submission if you wish acknowledgement of the receipt of your screenplay/teleplay (mailed-in entries only).
 - Online submissions will receive a confirmation email.
 - Notification letters will be sent by postal mail by mid-September. Semifinalists will be contacted by phone around this time.

Film and Produced Digital Series Competition

1. Submissions must be in English or have English subtitles at the time submitted.
2. Submissions must be submitted as an online streaming video via a participating submission platform (FilmFreeway), a password-protected streaming URL, or on DVD with NTSC or PAL formatting (please test before sending).
3. In the event of a password change or link change after submitting, you must email the Festival at programming@austinfilmfestival.com immediately with that change so we may update your record. If the Festival is not notified of the change and the link is found to be inactive or the password to be incorrect, the submission may be deemed ineligible.
4. Feature Films and Short Films must have been completed after April 1, 2019. Digital Series must have been completed after January 1, 2019. Films and Series must be available for screening during the Austin Film Festival, October 22-29, 2020.
5. Films and series that have been submitted to AFF in previous years are eligible to be resubmitted, provided they are eligible according to all of AFF's current rules.
6. Films and series with US distribution (obtained prior to being selected for AFF screening) or submissions produced, financed or initiated by a major film studio or television network are ineligible for competition, but may be considered for a special screening. Selection for screening will be determined no later than one month prior to the festival. Films that have screened on US network or cable television or distributed to theaters prior to the festival dates are also ineligible for competition.
7. Short Films that have played in Austin in a theatrical setting to a public audience prior to October 22, 2020 are not eligible to compete at Austin Film Festival. This includes Shorts Night or other festivals. The ONLY exception is that a short may play as part of a class screening for an accredited university's film program. We prefer that shorts be Texas premieres.
8. Short films that are publicly available online prior to the Festival may be considered for exhibition during the Festival, but will be ineligible for Jury Awards. We prefer that shorts not be publicly available online.
9. Feature films must be at least a Texas premiere. AFF will not screen features in competition that have played at other Texas festivals or screened publicly in a theater in Texas (including a one night only screening in a rented space) prior to October 22, 2020. We prefer World, North American, and US premieres and all things being equal, will often opt to program the film that has not yet had a release over one that has played at several festivals.
10. Digital Series must be the first one to three episodes of the series' first season. Only new series will be considered. Series that have played in Austin in a theatrical setting to a public audience prior to October 22, 2020 are not eligible to be screened at the Austin Film Festival.
11. Digital Series that are already publicly available online are still eligible for entry and Jury Award.
12. Private invite-only screenings (for instance for cast and crew or donors) do not affect a submission's eligibility.
13. AFF reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject or disqualify any ineligible entries, without a refund.
14. Films and series that are selected to screen at the Festival may not necessarily be selected to be "in competition" for awards purposes. Notifications regarding potential selection for competition status possibly may occur subsequent to notifications of acceptance for exhibition."

Competition Rules

Scripted Digital Series Competition

1. The Scripted Digital Series Competition is only open to writers who do not currently earn a living writing for film or television. TV staff writers are still eligible to submit.
2. Applicants can submit 1-3 episodes, either written or produced, totaling no more than 30 pages or 30 minutes.
3. Only new series will be considered. Submissions must be the first one to three consecutive episodes of the series' first season.
4. All series must be in English or, if applicable, have English subtitles at the time submitted.
5. Applicants may submit both filmed episodes and scripted episodes of their series, but each will require a separate application and payment.
6. Entrants that advance to the Semifinalist level will be asked to provide a treatment of their vision for the series and how subsequent episodes will unfold.

Playwriting Competition

1. The Playwriting Competition is only open to writers who do not currently earn a living writing for film or television. TV staff writers are still eligible to submit.
2. All plays submitted must be in English.
3. The play must not have been optioned, sold, had a professional production, or be scheduled to have a professional production prior to October 24, 2020. A "professional production" is defined as a staged production where the playwrights involved were or will be compensated for their intellectual property or work. Applicants must notify Austin Film Festival ("AFF" or the "Festival") of any changes in status following submission.
4. Applicants may submit more than one play.
5. Full-length plays, original or adapted, will be accepted. One-act plays, musicals, and screenplays will not be considered.
6. Preferred page length is around 60 – 90 pages. Plays will not be disqualified if the page length does not fit these parameters as long as it could reasonably be performed within 90 minutes on stage.
7. Be sure that a Character Breakdown precedes the script. Please include age and gender of each character. The breakdown should not exceed one page.

Originality and Permissions; INDEMNITY – All Competitions

1. Films/Scripts/Plays must be the original work of the applicants. If a film is based upon another person's life or upon a book or other underlying work, applicant(s) must secure any necessary rights to make such adaptations. However, it is not necessary to submit the adaptation rights agreements to the Festival. Neither the Festival nor its jurists investigate or attests to the authenticity of an applicant's statement of authorship or rights secured. By entering the competition, you are acknowledging that you have secured all necessary rights.
2. Applicants are solely responsible for obtaining all necessary rights and permissions for third-party materials included in the film, including but not limited to music, trademarks, logos, copyrights, and other intellectual property rights. AFF expressly disclaims all liability or responsibility for any violations of the foregoing.
3. BY SUBMITTING THE MATERIAL, THE APPLICANT HEREBY AGREES TO INDEMNIFY, HOLD HARMLESS, AND DEFEND THE FESTIVAL, ITS EMPLOYEES, DIRECTORS, REPRESENTATIVES, AND AFFILIATES FROM ANY LIABILITY, CLAIMS, AND DAMAGES IN CONNECTION WITH THE SUBMISSION AND FROM ANY FEES AND EXPENSES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO REASONABLE ATTORNEYS' FEES, THAT ANY OF THEM MAY INCUR IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

**27TH ANNUAL
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OCTOBER 22-29,**

**"This is the best place for
screenwriters in the world."**

**Lawrence Kasdan, writer/director *Body Heat*;
writer *The Empire Strikes Back***

FILM & PRODUCED DIGITAL SERIES DEADLINES

Early March 27 | **Regular** May 22 | **Late** June 26 | **Extended** July 6

FICTION PODCAST DEADLINES

Early April 17 | **Regular** May 15 | **Late** July 6

PLAYWRITING DEADLINES

Early April 17 | **Late** May 15

SCREENPLAY, TELEPLAY & SCRIPTED DIGITAL SERIES DEADLINES

Early March 27 | **Regular** April 17 | **Late** May 15



1801 Salina Street
Austin, Texas 78702
1-800-310-FEST



ENDERBY
ENTERTAINMENT



ROOSTER TEETH



WUNDERMAN
THOMPSON



HUMANITAS
CHANGING THE WORLD ONE STORY AT A TIME

This project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of
The City of Austin Economic Development Department and
The Texas Commission on the Arts.

Lifelong connections and life-changing moments.

We love introducing writers to the people that can inspire and elevate their careers. AFF thrives on discovering the next crop of brilliant stories for distribution deals just like *The Animal People* (acquired by Virgil Films & Entertainment) and *The Wretched* (acquired by IFC Midnight) in 2019. Plus, there are countless writers and filmmakers like Andrew Lanham, Maggie Carey, Cary Fukunaga, Jeff Nichols, Ray McKinnon, Jason Reitman, and Chase Palmer continuing to make great work that got their start in Austin.

So, don't let your best ideas just sit there...submit your gem to AFF!



**Co-writer Andrew Lanham (2010 AFF
Drama Screenplay Winner) and actor
Tim Blake Nelson – Closing Night
2019 screening of *Just Mercy* (Photo
credit: Jack Plunkett)**



**Co-writer/Co-director/Actor Hannah
Leder & Producer Jacqueline Beiro –
2019 Comedy Vanguard Jury Winners
for *The Planters* (Photo credit: Jack
Plunkett)**



**Wade in the Water
cast and crew walking
the red carpet at AFF 26**

Young Filmmakers Welcome!

At Austin Film Festival, we strive to support the next generation of storytellers, which is why we have a **FREE** film competition for young filmmakers ages 13-18. At the Young Filmmakers Showcase, selected animated, documentary, and narrative films from all around the world will play on the big screen in front of a supportive audience of festival-goers. AFF is a great place to start your path in film.

"AFF was a must for our film. We had the opportunity in having a screenplay be a second rounder in 2016 and we had an amazing time! Since then we knew our film needed to be a part of this grounded and truly an independent filmmaker film festival that focuses on great storytelling. It's a fun party and you'll meet so many inspiring artists and credible ones as well!"

Mark Wilson, Director – 2019 Narrative Feature *Wade in the Water*