

# N M S A

A STORY ABOUT A SCHOOL'S BECOMING

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

P R E S S   K I T

A POTTER PICTURES PRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER EARL POTTER PRODUCED BY TIMOTHY HARRIER  
DIRECTED BY TIMOTHY HARRIER STORY BY FAERL MARIE TORRES EDITED BY KEVIN GUEVARA



NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

## SYNOPSIS

In the shadow of ancient mesas and under a sky that seems to stretch into eternity, a different kind of frontier has emerged, one defined not by land, but by imagination. 'NMSA - A Story About a School's Becoming', is a visceral, soul-stirring documentary that pulls back the curtain on the New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA), where art is not merely taught, it's lived, risked, and reborn each day.

The film opens with *The Art of Becoming*, a poem spoken in the voice of the Muse, as dawn light fractures across a studio floor. From this first breath, we are thrust into a world where the lines between youth and mastery blur, and where becoming an artist means becoming fully, fearlessly human. Two timelines weave through the narrative: one retracing the improbable founding of the school, its early makeshift rehearsals in borrowed church halls, its visionary architects and battles for funding, and the other following the charged present tense of daily life at NMSA.

Inside these walls, education becomes ignition. We watch a ballerina map flight down a fluorescent corridor; a painter excavate color from memory; a poet whisper lines into the dark that feel like thunder. This is not performance for the sake of applause, but art forged in fire, raw, defiant, searching. Classrooms feel less like institutions than incubators of invention, spaces where teachers conspire with students to dare more, fail harder, and reach further.

Interviews with founders, faculty, and alumni are not framed as exposition but as oral history, woven into a living archive of ambition, resilience, and grace. Their voices ripple with candor and awe, testifying to a place where mentorship is sacred, and art is inseparable from identity. These are not talking heads, they are witnesses.

The film builds to ArtSpring, the school's annual gala and rite of passage, where four years of labor, longing, and transformation erupt onto the stage in a kaleidoscope of performance and purpose. Here, students do not simply showcase their talent, they declare their arrival. This is art as exhale, as catharsis, as communion.

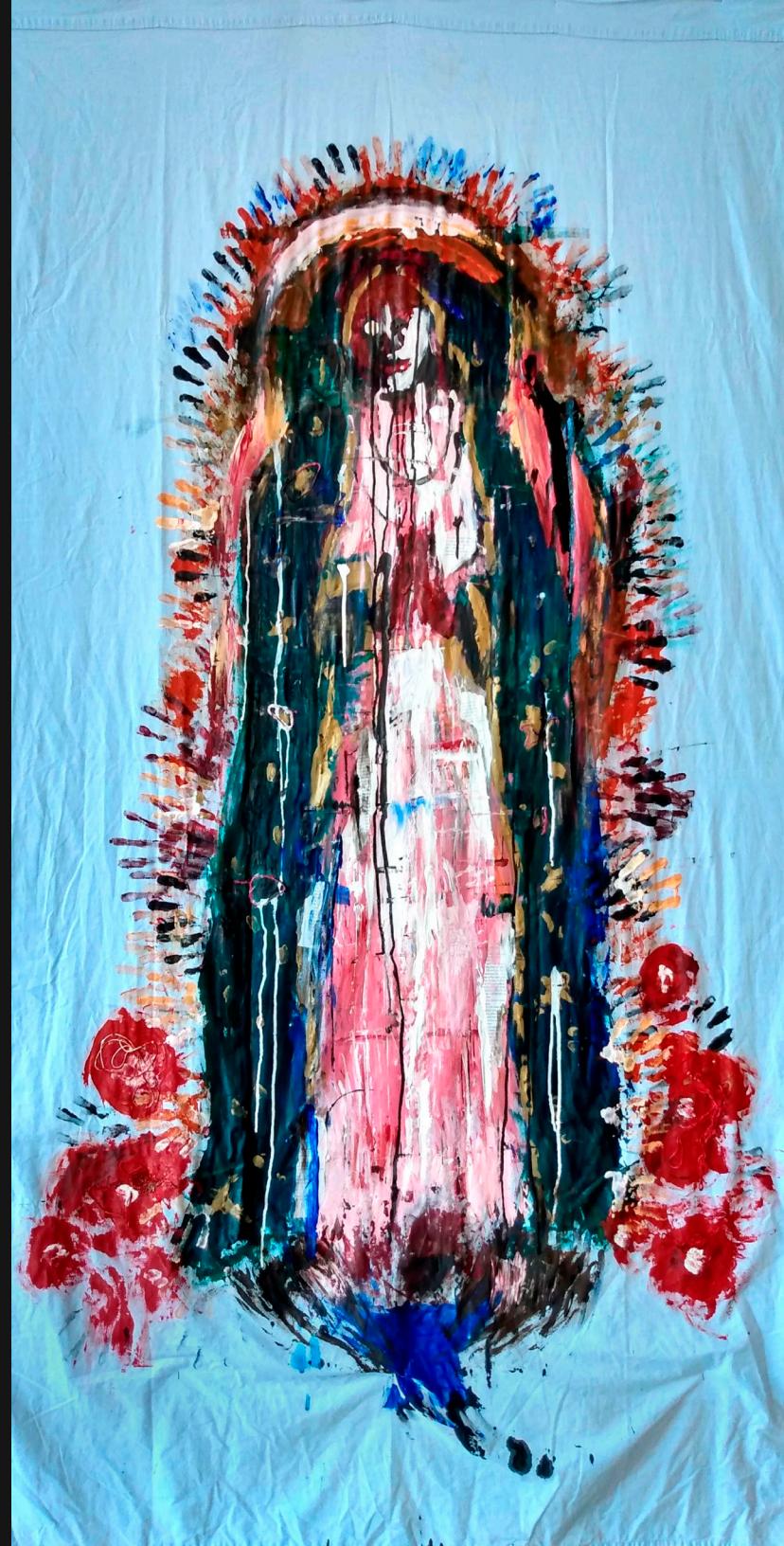
And just beyond the stage, the story continues. With the unveiling of the new Residential Life building, an architectural embodiment of NMSA's growing vision, students from across New Mexico now live, dream, and create together in full immersion. The ribbon-cutting is more than ceremony; it is a marker of generational promise. This is the future of arts education being built brick by brick, brushstroke by brushstroke.

Set against the haunting beauty and cultural resonance of Santa Fe, NMSA becomes a meditation on what it means to nurture genius in the raw, to protect the vulnerability of expression, and to stake a claim for the arts in an age of distraction. This is not a promotional film. It is an elegy, an anthem, and a call to arms.

"NMSA - A Story About a School's Becoming", is a testament to the transformative power of creative education, a cinematic love letter to the alchemy of youth, discipline, and dream. It's not just a school. It's a sanctuary. A stage. A forge. A threshold.

And for the students within it, it's where everything begins.

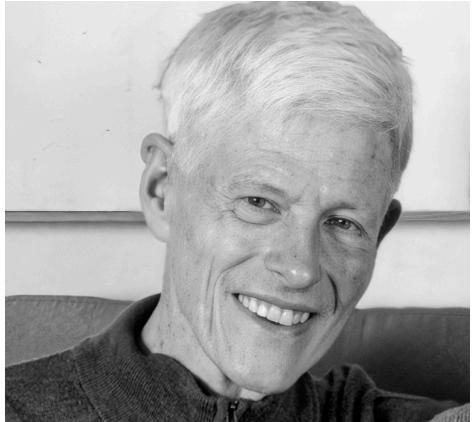
The Art of Becoming.





EARL POTTER  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

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Earl Potter has built a reputation for films that listen closely and look carefully, drawing out the quiet moments where culture is shaped. His latest project, *NMSA – A Story About a School’s Becoming*, continues this approach with understated precision.

The film documents the New Mexico School for the Arts as it marks its 15th anniversary, a milestone that highlights how quickly the school has become one of the state’s most vital cultural institutions. At its center is the poem *The Art of Becoming*, a refrain that gives shape to the story. The poem speaks to transformation—how the act of becoming an artist is less about arriving at mastery than about inhabiting the ongoing process of growth, discovery, and vulnerability. Potter uses this framework to anchor the film, weaving the school’s history with intimate portraits of students as they navigate doubt, breakthrough, and the fragile beginnings of confidence.

Potter has long been interested in the intersections of art, place, and community. His *H.C. Potter: A Son’s Story* (2017) traced a Hollywood career through the lens of family history, while *A Five & Dime Story* (2024) explored the reinvention of a landmark space in downtown Santa Fe. With *NMSA – A Story About a School’s Becoming*, he captures not just a school at 15 years, but the universal experience of transformation—what it means to live in the art of becoming.

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**TIM HARRIER**  
PRODUCER & DIRECTOR



Tim Harrier is a filmmaker for whom form and feeling are indivisible. A visual strategist as much as a storyteller, his work spans disciplines—documentary film, fine art, and branding—with a single, unifying drive: to distill complex truths into arresting, emotionally resonant images.

His latest film, *NMSA: A Story About a School's Becoming*, is a quietly powerful portrait of the New Mexico School for the Arts—an institution devoted to cultivating young artists in the American Southwest. Intimate in scale but expansive in implication, the film showcases Harrier's signature restraint and depth, allowing stories to emerge without force or editorial varnish. It is his third collaboration with producer Earl Potter under the Potter Pictures banner, following *H.C. Potter: A Son's Story* and *The Five & Dime Story*. Each has screened to acclaim at the Santa Fe International Film Festival and the New Mexico History Museum.

Trained at the Herron School of Art and the Tamarind Institute, Harrier brings a painter's discipline to the moving image. His photographic work has earned international attention, notably *Shamans & Spirit Guides*—a metaphysical exploration of the spiritual Southwest that has exhibited at ART-ICON in Paris, Rencontres d'Arles, and in cities across the U.S.

His series *Cocoon of Despair*, a stark meditation on isolation, mortality, and transformation, blends conceptual clarity with visceral intensity, revealing the artist's ongoing fascination with the threshold between vulnerability and transcendence.

His newest body of work, *Dark Passages, Gaza*, is an unflinching meditation on war, ethics, and the fragility of moral certainty. Executed in charcoal and ink, the series evokes Dante as much as documentary, asking not only what we see—but what we choose not to.

Beyond his artistic practice, Harrier is the founder of Graphic Design Santa Fe, a multidisciplinary agency known for pairing high design with strategic storytelling. His branding campaigns span the U.S., Canada, and Europe, with clients including Procter & Gamble, GE Aircraft, Coca-Cola, Levi's, Kroger, and the U.S. Armed Forces. Across all mediums, Harrier's work is grounded in a belief that message and meaning should never be strangers.

He divides his time between Santa Fe and Cincinnati, where he maintains working studios. As a mentor and collaborator, he continues to guide emerging voices, championing creative integrity while forging new paths between the artistic and the essential.

FAERL MARIE TORRES  
WRITER

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Faerl Marie Torres does not merely write stories—she dissects them, unearths them, and breathes them into being with a scholar’s eye and a mystic’s heart. In a world saturated with noise, her words resonate with a quieter thunder—measured, precise, and reverent of narrative truth.

An award-winning and restlessly interdisciplinary writer, Torres navigates fiction, nonfiction, academic essays, lifestyle writing, and technical communication with the grace of a conductor weaving together Mahler and Miles Davis. Whether scripting a documentary or shaping copy in healthcare and the sciences, her compass remains true: language, in service of understanding.

NMSA: A Story About a School’s Becoming (2025), marks her second collaboration with Potter Pictures, following her poignant work on *A Five & Dime Story* (2023), a meditation on memory, place, and community. In *NMSA: A Story About a School’s Becoming*, Torres weaves interviews, poetry, and personal testimony into a lyrical, living archive of artistic becoming—crafted with the insight to know when to speak, and when to let silence sing.

Based in the mountains east of Albuquerque with her husband, daughter, and their dogs, Faerl Marie Torres is not just a writer—she is a listener, an excavator, and a voice-giver. Her work reminds us that stories, at their best, don’t just inform—they transform.

## KEVIN GUEVARA

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DP & EDITOR



Kevin Guevara's images don't shout; they listen. They hover, wait, and breathe—holding just long enough for the truth to arrive. Raised in Santa Fe, he inherited more than a place; he absorbed a palette. That gauzy, sky-drenched light, the hush between mountain winds, the texture of quiet—these are his early teachers. They continue to shape his vision, even as his camera now follows stories across continents and cultures.

A decade into a career that has spanned urban sprawl and vast wilderness, Guevara remains guided by the intimate: a glance, a pause, a gesture on the edge of expression. His work merges the precision of a documentarian with the soul of a poet—no frame accidental, every cut a meditation.

As a second-generation American, he approaches each assignment with a kind of reverence—for context, for identity, for nuance. The result is a body of work marked by restraint and resonance. Whether filming on the deck of a trawler or down an alley lit by vending machines in Tokyo, he's not chasing spectacle; he's gathering fragments of the human condition and letting them bloom onscreen.

In *NMSA: A Story About a School's Becoming* (2025), Guevara returns to his roots with a project as personal as it is professional. Serving as both Director of Photography and Editor, he partners with Potter Pictures to document the journey of young artists at a school shaped, like him, by the New Mexico light. But this is no simple portrait—it's a requiem of becoming. His camera does not merely observe; it attunes. Scenes unfurl in whispers, edits glide like breath between stanzas, and what emerges is not reportage but communion.

Guevara's work is quiet but indelible. It lingers in the margins where transformation hides—where a student holds their first confident note, or a painter pauses, brush trembling, before the canvas speaks. His art lies in capturing not just what happens, but what it means to be on the verge of becoming.





NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"NMSA: A Story About a School's Becoming" began with a question: What does it look like when art is not just taught—but lived?

As a filmmaker and artist, I've always been drawn to those moments when creativity isn't polished or rehearsed, but raw, formative, and urgent. The New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA) isn't just a school - it's an incubator where young artists are handed the keys to their own voices, and asked - sometimes gently, sometimes with a necessary jolt - Who are you willing to become?

This film doesn't follow a single student, or even a single path. Instead, it moves like jazz - improvisational, layered, structured in spirit but unafraid to wander. We blend vérité footage with stylized soundscapes, hallway conversations with poetic interludes, and faculty wisdom with the unfiltered fire of teenage ambition. The camera is never a bystander - it listens, leans in, sometimes steps back in awe.

Stylistically, I wanted the film to echo the nature of the school itself: interdisciplinary, genre-fluid, and full of beautiful contradiction. One moment may feel like a documentary, the next like an experimental dance film. Because that's how it feels to walk the halls of NMSA, where the lines between painter and playwright, dancer and dreamer, singer and scientist blur in real time.

This isn't just a story of gifted kids making art. It's a story about a community, teachers, administrators, alumni, founders, risking everything to create a space where art matters more than test scores, where becoming an artist is not a luxury, but a calling. The school, like the students, is still becoming. And that, I believe, is the truest form of artistry.

**TIM HARRIER**

Director, *NMSA: A Story About a School's Becoming*



## FACT SHEET

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### TITLE

NMSA: A Story About a School's Becoming

### KEY CREW

Timothy Harrier - Director & Producer

Earl Potter - Executive Producer

Kevin Guevara - DP & Editor

Faerl Marie Torres - Writer

### CAST

Eric Crites - Head of School

Cindy Montoya - President

Lori Ayala - Principal

Isabella Aldana - Residential Director

Sarah Pfisterer - NMSA Artistic Director

Fernando Ramos - Chair, Dance Department

John Rangel - Chair, Music Department

Barbara Hatch - Chair, Theatre Department

Liam Daly - Visual Arts Instructor

Cynthia Nava - Former NM State Senator & NMSA Board Member

Brian Egolf - Former Speaker of the House

Catherine Oppenheimer - Visionary Founder & NMSA Chair Emeritus

Deborah Potter - NMSA Board of Directors

Stuart Ashman - NMSA Co-Founder, 2003 – 2010

Garrett Thornburg - Visionary Founder & NMSA Board Member Emeritus

Than Povi Martinez - NMSA Alumni

Hugo Pizano Orozco - NMSA Alumni

Racheal Baltz - NMSA Alumni

Kelly Burmerstat - NMSA Alumni

Claire Motsinger - NMSA Alumni

Julia Baca-Wiseley - NMSA Alumni

Erika Easterbrooks - NMSA Student

Ash Chavez - NMSA Student

Oliver Campbell - NMSA Student

Gloria Galassi - NMSA Student

Oliver Cordova - NMSA Student

Michael Hernandez - NMSA Student

### PRODUCTION COMPANY

POTTER PICTURES LLC

### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND LANGUAGE

United States, English

### GENRE AND RUNTIME

Documentary, 41:29

### LOGLINE

When a band of relentless educators stakes a claim in Santa Fe's high-desert light, "NMSA – A Story About a School's Becoming" tracks the walk-and-talk from rebel blueprint to standing ovation, showing how one audacious public arts school turns raw teenage talent into fearless, full-throated humanity—and proves that in the real American frontier, imagination is the land grab that matters.

### RELEASE DATE

October 2025

### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PRESS INQUIRIES

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Santa Fe, NM 87505  
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#### TIMOTHY HARRIER

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## Q & A WITH TIM HARRIER

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### 1. What inspired you to make a film about NMSA at this moment in time?

The 15th anniversary wasn't just a checkpoint, it was a reflection point. A moment to look back and see what's really been built. NMSA isn't just an arts school. It's a portal. I saw students walk through its doors and emerge transformed, voices shaking with urgency, feet grounded in purpose. That kind of transformation deserved a lens. Not just to archive it, but to celebrate it. To witness the art of becoming.

### 2. What does "The Art of Becoming" mean within the film?

It's the heartbeat of the entire story. It's not just what these students create, it's who they become in the process. Becoming isn't tidy or predictable. It's chaotic, courageous, and deeply human. It's where talent meets identity. At NMSA, becoming is structured and wild all at once, and that paradox was something we wanted the film to hold with reverence.

### 3. How did you shape the narrative for the film?

We began by listening. To teachers, to students, to the buildings themselves. The narrative emerged like a mural, layered and living. We weren't chasing a plot. We were chasing presence. It was about honoring the small, incandescent moments where a student says, "I belong here," or a teacher pauses to say, "You just found your voice." That's the rhythm we followed.

### 4. The school is both public and private in structure. How did that duality come through in the film?

That tension is part of its strength. NMSA is a public charter school, tuition-free, but it carries the heartbeat of a conservatory. That means students from all over New Mexico, many from rural or underrepresented communities, are given a space where the arts aren't extracurricular; they're central. The film shows how access and excellence can live in the same sentence, the same student, the same frame.

### 5. What role did authenticity play in making this film?

It was non-negotiable. Every frame had to breathe real air. We weren't staging anything; we were witnessing it. We captured missed notes, trembling voices, laughter in the hallways, because that's where truth lives. These students weren't performing for the camera. They were simply being. And in being, they gave us everything.

### 6. How did your vérité footage influence the final cut?

Our roaming, handheld approach wasn't just a stylistic choice — it became the film's pulse.

By slipping into rehearsals, critiques, and hallway epiphanies without warning, the camera caught what no script could stage: the quiet doubts, the sudden sparks, the fragile pivots when art begins to take flight. Those unscripted fragments aren't filler; they're the very marrow of the story.

The vérité footage insisted that the narrative breathe in real time, with all the jaggedness of lived experience. You feel the sweat, the silence before a note, the laughter breaking tension. What emerged in the final cut is less a portrait of a school than a living organism, thrumming with risk and revelation. It reminds us that this story isn't manufactured — it's inhabited, moment by moment.

### 7. Were there moments during filming that shifted your understanding of the school?

Absolutely. There was a moment in a writing class when a student read something so raw and real the room just stopped breathing. It reminded me that NMSA isn't about shaping artists into something. It's about allowing them to reveal who they already are. The school doesn't push; it invites. That shifted my entire lens.

### 8. You've worked across many creative disciplines. How did that inform your filmmaking approach?

Each discipline teaches you to listen differently. As a painter, I saw composition. As a photographer, I hunted light. As a sculptor, I watched form emerge from struggle. And as a director, I knew when to get out of the way. I approached the film like a multi-medium installation, each department, each student, a moving part of a larger whole. The goal was to let it remain porous and human.

### 9. What would you want a parent, especially one with a creatively inclined child, to take away from this film?

That talent is a spark, but it needs oxygen. NMSA provides that oxygen, through mentors, peers, discipline, and freedom. It's not just about turning out dancers or playwrights. It's about forming whole people who think, feel, and express with depth. This film is an invitation: if your child has that spark, this might be the place where it catches fire.

### 10. What does this film ultimately say about the purpose of arts education?

It says that art is how we become fully human. Not in theory, in practice. Arts education isn't a luxury. It's a lifeline. At NMSA, students are allowed to make mistakes, find their edges, and grow beyond them. The purpose of arts education, as this film shows, is not just to train, but to liberate. And liberation, in any form, is a beautiful thing to film.

## LINK TO ASSETS

### PRESS KIT NMSA: A Story About A School's Becoming

Included in asset folder is the following:

## TRAILER AND FILM:

"NMSA: A Story About A School's Becoming" trailer

"NMSA: A Story About A School's Becoming" film.

## PRODUCTION STILLS

### HEAD SHOTS OF:

Earl W. Potter - Executive Producer

Timothy Harrier - Director & Producer

Fael Marie Torres - Writer

Kevin Guevara - DP & Editor

## POSTER

NMSA - A Story About A School's Becoming

## FESTIVALS / AWARDS

TBA

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE LINKS:

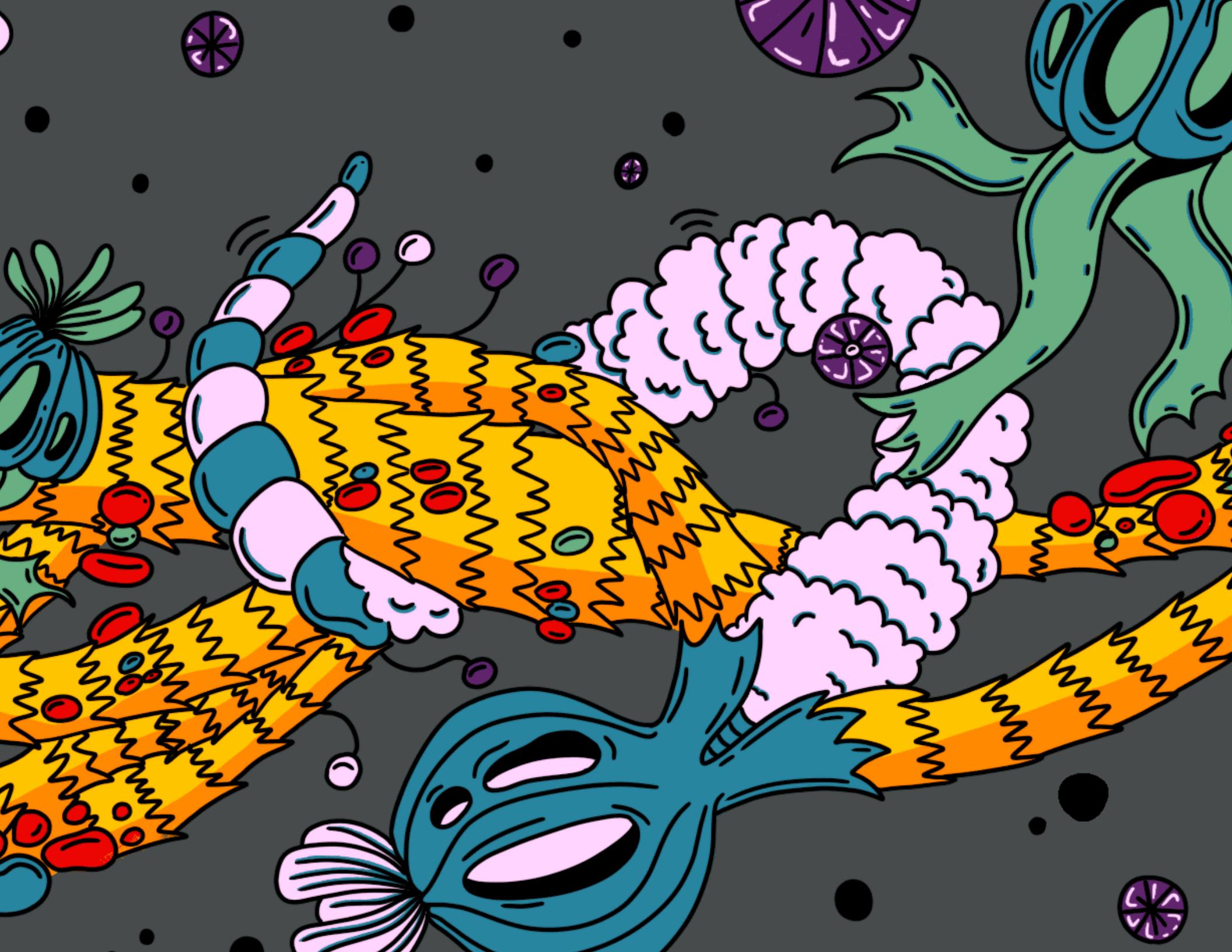
Facebook: TBA

Instagram: TBA

## RELEASE PLATFORMS: (TBA)

List of theaters, streaming platforms, and regions where the film will be available.













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