



September

A short film by Corey Atkins



September is a meditation on loss and regret—but also a tribute to the life force of New York City, and the refuge of Central Park.

And it's an ode to a generation of lost queer elders who fought, and died, so that others might live without fear. It's a fight we remember, and continue, in this film and beyond.

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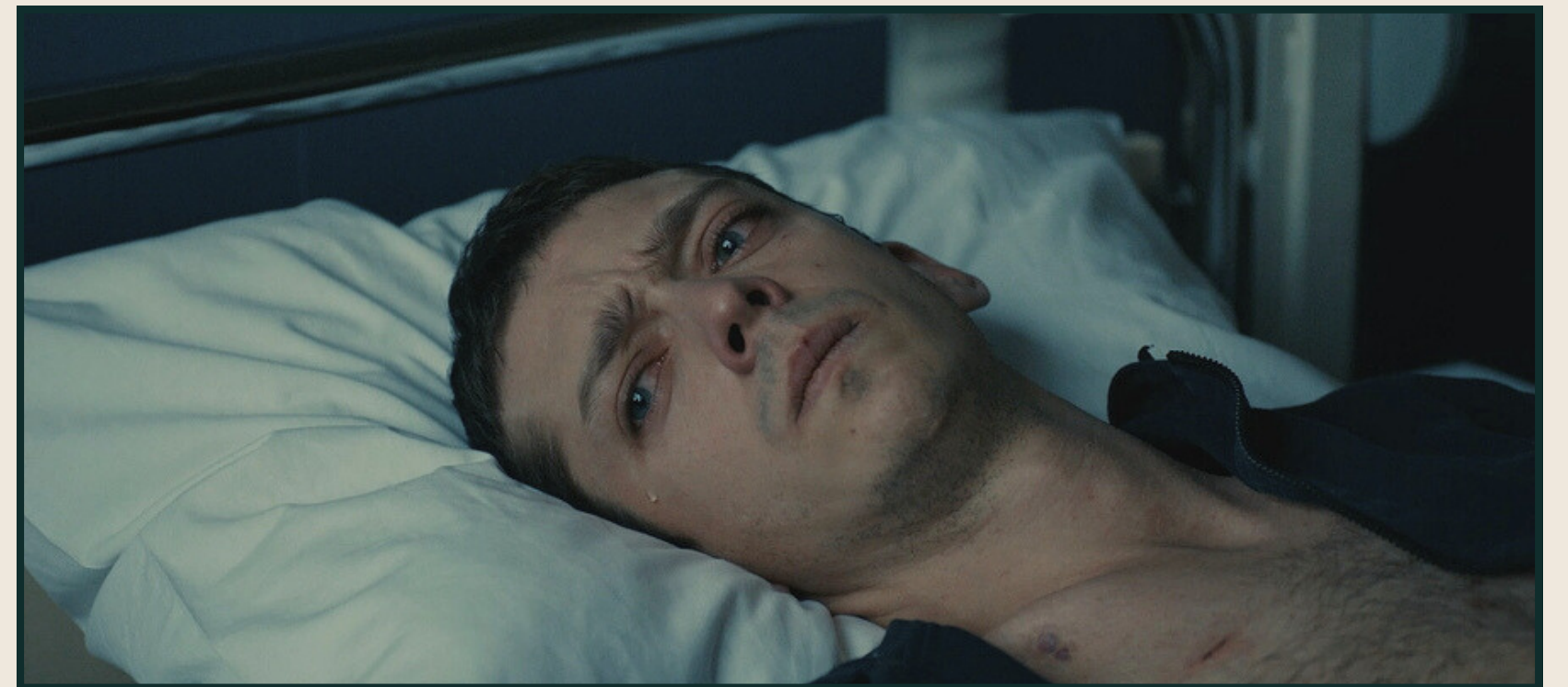
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STORY

In *September*, we experience one man's twenty-year journey of remembrance —

and reckoning.



As he takes in the the life and connection around him from a rowboat on Central Park Lake, he remembers the deep love he found, then ran from, when faced with the specter of AIDS.





As night falls, he comes to accept that
grief and regret are like the seasons:
they shift and change—

but they are always there.

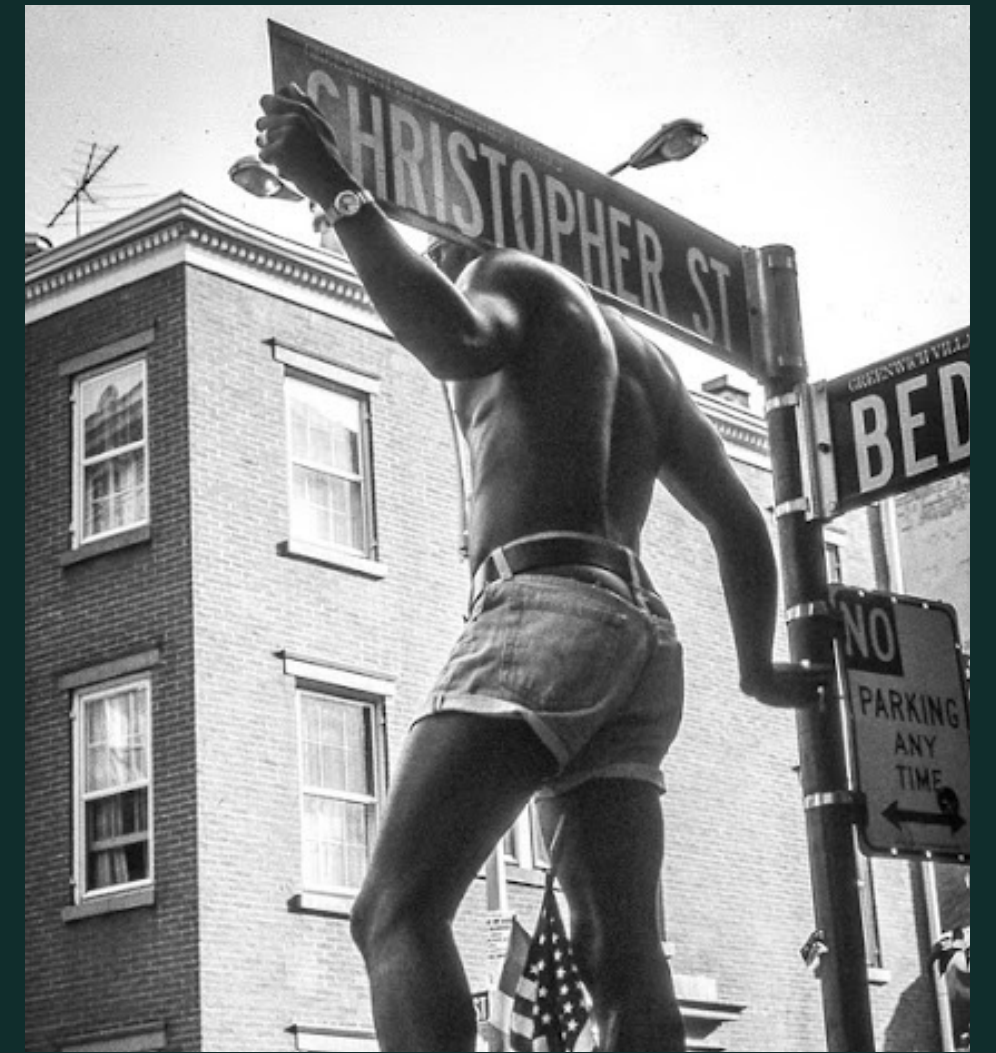
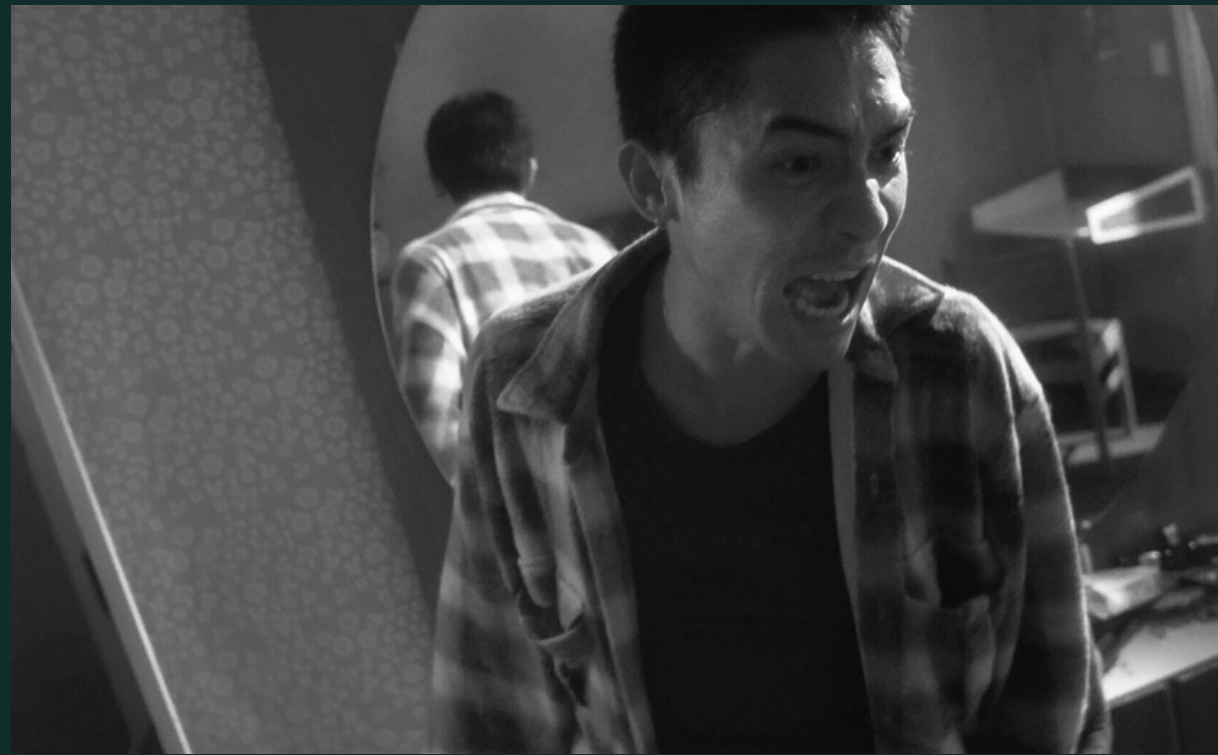
*September is adapted from the poem
by best-selling author and poet,
Jennifer Michael Hecht.*

THE WORLDS: MEMORY

We first see the Young Man, the Man's lost love, in a black & white photograph taken in the 1990s.

From this, other memories come rushing in—also seen in black and white.



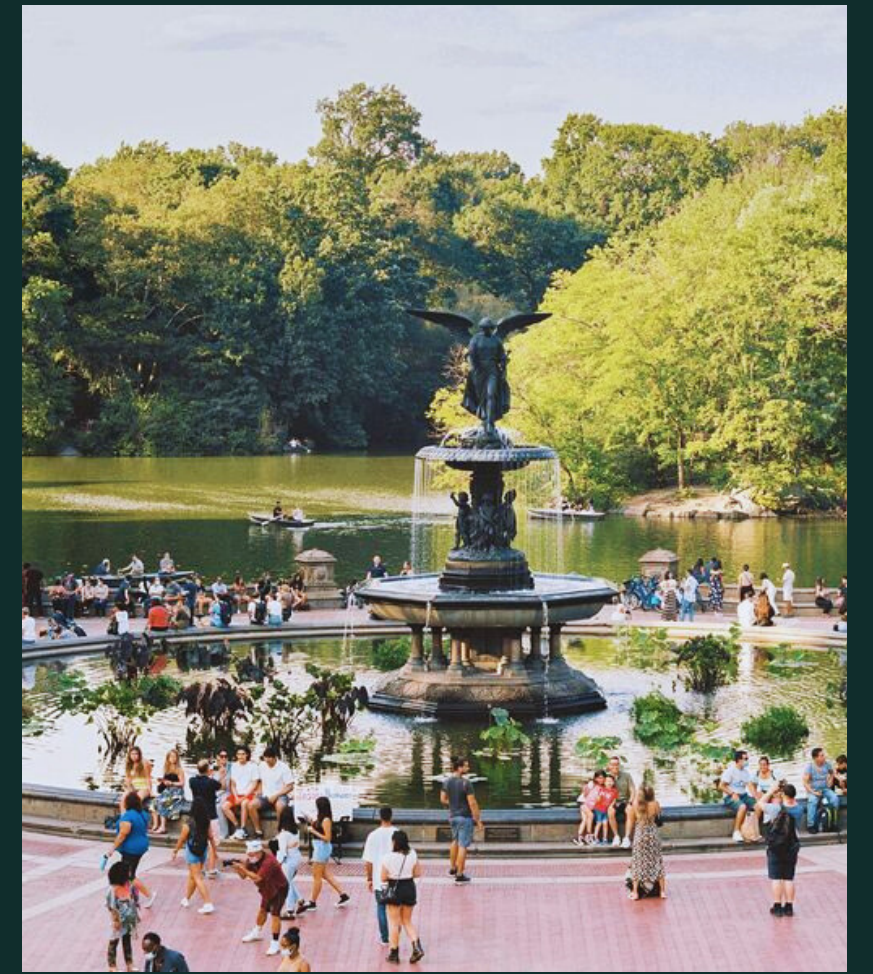


THE WORLDS: CENTRAL PARK

In the Park, the Man finds a kind of contentment in the human connection and joy he observes from the water—

Even as it reminds him of ways in which he's lost those things.





LOOK & FEEL

September pulls us into the Man's physical and emotional journey.

We shift from sunset's glow to the solitude of night as he travels across the lake—

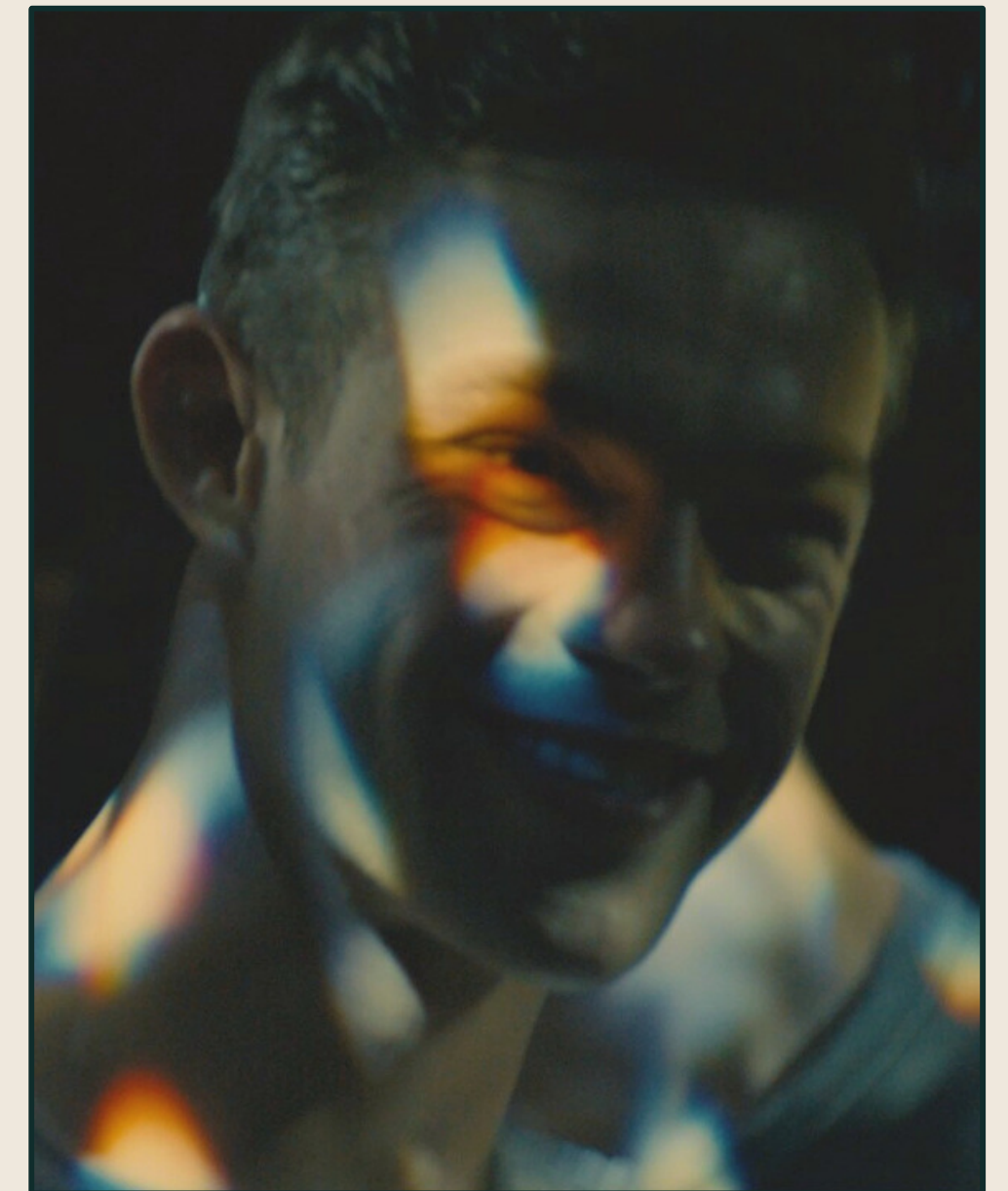
and into his own memory.



Textured & Contemplative

With an emphasis on texture, light, and depth—

the Man's thoughts and feelings become palpable.



Interiority & Character POV

We see what, and
how, the Man sees—

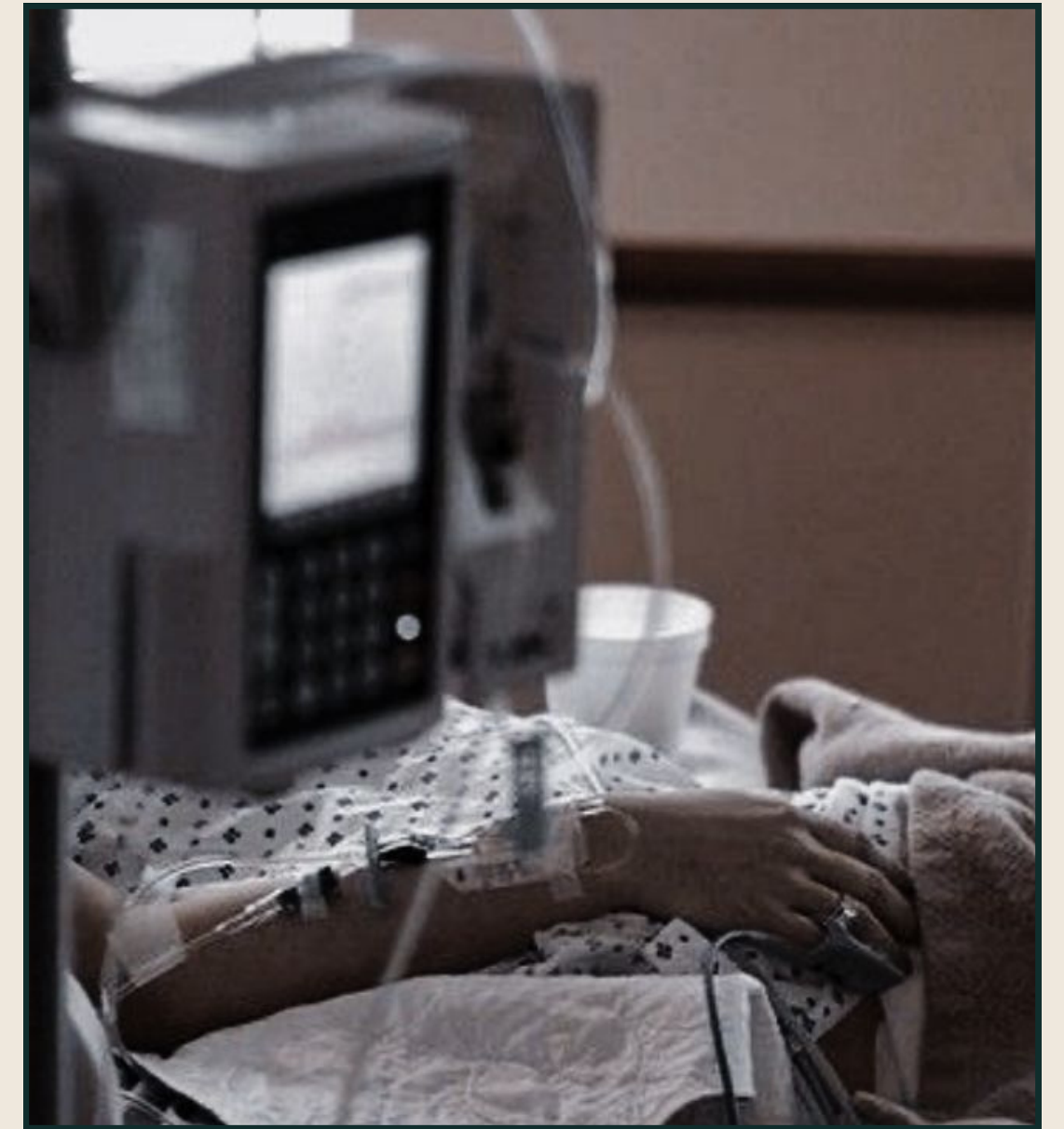
including how
he sees
himself.



Pieces & Parts

Like memory itself,
September plays with
image echoes and
fragments—

creating an unexpected
sense of the
whole.



CAST

FRANKIE J. ÁLVAREZ

MAN

Frankie is a bilingual actor from Miami, best known as the passionate Agustín on the critically-acclaimed HBO show *Looking* (Imágen Award nom, Best Supporting Actor) and its companion, *LOOKING: THE MOVIE*. He recently starred opposite Danny Glover in the film *The Drummer*, and on stage in the *New York Times Critics' Pick*, *Wet Brain*, at Playwrights Horizons. He has recurred on *Smash* and *Blindspot*, and guest-starred on *Let the Right One In*, *Fantasy Island*, and *The Good Wife*, among others. He is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where he received the Raúl Julia Scholarship for Excellence in Drama.



GUSTAVO MÁRQUEZ

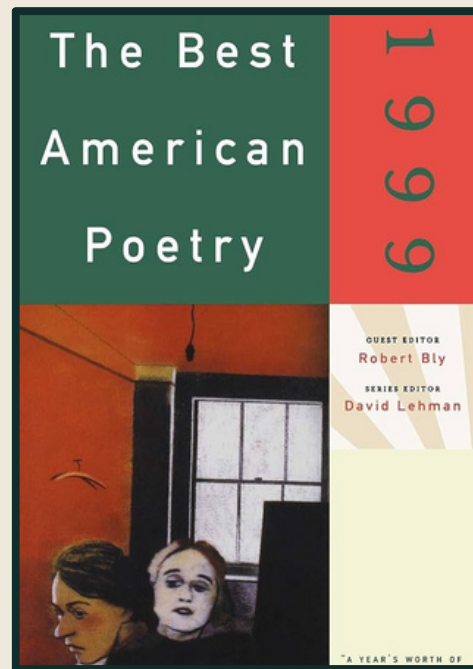
YOUNG MAN

Gustavo is a recent graduate of the Case Western Reserve University/Cleveland Play House MFA Acting Program. A first generation Mexican-American, he draws from his varied life experiences—from caring for his mother as she transitioned after a battle with cancer, to working as a janitor in Antarctica—in pursuit of telling stories that reflect his experience. Screen credits include *And Just Like That...*, *Chicago P.D.*, and *Blue Bloods*, and he's been seen onstage at professional theatre companies such as Denver Center Theatre Company and Cleveland Play House.

www.Gustavo-Marquez.com



ARTISTIC STATEMENT



Christmas, 1999. I'm given a poetry anthology that includes Jennifer Michael Hecht's *September*. It lives with me for 20+ years. Then comes March, 2020.

Locked down in my Harlem apartment, I read about how the pandemic is stirring up memories for those who lived through the darkest part of the AIDS epidemic—how similar the feelings of loss and fear, how drastically different the government response when the disease isn't a “gay plague.” (Reagan didn't publicly say “AIDS” until five years into the epidemic.)

We've all thought about loss and regret, time and aging—especially these last few years. I certainly have. Like when I'd escape from pandemic isolation to the beauty and history of Central Park: the Lake, the Great Lawn, the Ramble. And I found my mind returning to the poem I first read in 1999. Though there is no narrative in the poem, *per se*, the story suddenly felt crystal clear to me.

With this film I wanted to look to the past, to feel how it lives in our present, and to encourage a future where love—not fear—is our guide.

- Corey Atkins

VISION



Our vision for *September* is two-fold:

- Applying to leading film festivals
With recognizable talent, a powerful story, and an excellent team, our odds are strong.
- Seeking community collaborations
We'll work to bring the film and related programming to LGBTQ+ and HIV/AIDS organizations, as well as educational institutions and community groups.



IMPACT

By partnering with organizations whose work connects with our story, we broaden the film's impact beyond the usual scope, for both artists and audiences.

Examples of possible collaborations include:

- *Offer student screenings followed by talkbacks with queer elders, creating intergenerational dialogue.*
- *Generate community remembrance and engagement through World AIDS Day events.*
- *Support educational programs around sexual health for the queer community, including working with brands like those offering PrEP.*



THE TEAM



DIRECTOR/ADAPTER
COREY ATKINS

Corey Atkins is a director, writer and creative producer who mines his *Napoleon Dynamite*-esque upbringing in Idaho/Utah, and his love of history, to tell inventive, inclusive, character-driven stories about place, identity and belonging.

As a director Corey has worked with theatres coast to coast, from Lincoln Center to Oregon Shakes. He's written for stage, screen, and even newspapers (remember those!?), and his *The Other Two* spec script was recently named an Austin Film Festival 'second-rounder.' As a creative producer, he's worked with Obie Award-winning The Playwrights Realm since 2017, and was Associate Producer at the 2015 Tony Award-winning Cleveland Play House from 2011-16. He also works with The Writers Lab (founding donor Meryl Streep), an organization helping develop the work and careers of women screenwriters age 40+.

Corey is a Drama League Directing Fellow, a member of the Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, and a former member of the Translation Committee of the Latinx Theatre Commons. M.F.A. Directing - University of Texas at Austin.



WRITER, SOURCE POEM

JENNIFER MICHAEL
HECHT

Jennifer Michael Hecht is a poet and historian. Her new book, released in March 2023, is *The Wonder Paradox: Embracing the Weirdness of Existence and the Poetry of Our Lives*.

She is also the author of the bestseller *Doubt: A History*, examining religious and philosophical doubt all over the world, throughout history. Publisher's Weekly called her poetry book, *Funny*, "One of the most original and entertaining books of the year." Her first book of poetry, *The Next Ancient World*, won three national awards, including the Poetry Society of America's First Book award for 2001.

Hecht has written for *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Politico*, *Vox*, *Poetry*, and *The New Yorker*. She holds a Ph.D. in the history of science/European cultural history from Columbia University (1995) and has taught in the MFA program at Columbia University and the New School in New York City.



PRODUCER
NAT MAJETTE

Nat Majette is an L.A.-based producer with a comprehensive background in commercials, music videos, and narrative films.

Their work thematically centers around coming of age stories that shed light on viscerally intimate, palpable, under-represented narratives.

They have worked on television shows and films on Amazon Prime, MAX, Netflix, and branded content featured in *Vogue*, *GQ*, *Vanity Fair*, *Allure*, and *Glamour*.



**DIRECTOR OF
PHOTOGRAPHY**
EASTON CARTER ANGLE

Easton Carter Angle is a transgender Director of Photography based on the East Coast, specializing in narrative and documentary.

He got his start at Temple University studying media arts and visual anthropology. He found himself drawn to documentaries and focused on issues facing the LGBTQ+ community. Upon graduating, he was awarded the Lavender Award for his documentary work.

His short films and docs have been in film festivals and museums including; Black Star Film Festival, Outfest, Newfest, Frameline, the Brooklyn Museum and the Whitney Museum. His commercial work includes brands such as Shopify, Big Think, and Subaru.

Easton was also recipient of the ASC Vision Mentorship for emerging cinematographers and is now receiving mentorship from Jonathan Freeman, ASC.



**1ST ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR**
RHI COLLINS



**PRODUCTION
DESIGNER**
ELIZABETH MAY



**COSTUME
DESIGNER**
CANDIDA K.
NICHOLS



**HAIR, MAKE-UP
& AGING EFFECTS**
AGNES LIN



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