BSO sets cohort for Rogers script development fund

The Black Screen Office delivers the program in partnership with Rogers Group of Fund and the Canadian Independent Screen Fund for BPOC Creators.

BY JERICHO TADEO

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The Black Screen Office (BSO) has selected 11 writers to participate in the sixth edition of the Rogers-BSO Script Development Fund.

Delivered in partnership with Rogers Group of Fund and the Canadian Independent Screen Fund for BPOC Creators, the program offers Black and racialized writers funding, mentorship and industry connections to develop original scripted and documentary TV projects.

This year's program begins with a writers' retreat outside Toronto that runs from Friday (Oct. 30) to Sunday (Nov. 1). The retreat is led by TV writer and showrunner Anthony Q. Farrell (*Overlord and the Underwoods*) and doc filmmaker and **Oya Media Group** co-founder Alison Duke (*Michelle Ross: Unknown Icon*).

Following the retreat, the writers will receive individual mentorship, script consultations and opportunities to pitch their projects to broadcasters, producers and streaming platforms.

Seven of the writers are from Ontario, including Toronto's Bernard Gray, with the half-hour *Rashomon*-style series *Uptown Saturday*; **JP Larocque** (6 x 60-minute limited series *Open*); Vincent Shiao (10 x 60-minute drama *The Disappeared*); Tiffany Hsiung (10 x 30-minute dark comedy *Hold This*); and Hui Wang with the doc *Wonder Years*.

Rounding out the writers from Ontario are Etobicoke's Jezabel Bamberg (half-hour comedy *Second Coming*) and Mississauga's Adnan Khan (one-hour limited series *The Boat*).

The Montreal-based writers are Edith Kabuya, developing the 6 x 60-minute psychosexual thriller *Le Lac*, and Zecharias Zelalem, with the observational doc *Until We Know Their Names* (co-written with Tamara Dawit).

Calgary's Omatta Udalor is developing the 7 x 22-minute comedy *Pastor G*, while Vancouver's Kaylyn Johnson brings the 8 x 60-minute drama *222*.

The Rogers-BSO Script Development Fund launched in 2021 and has supported 72 projects through its previous five rounds. According to a news release, alumni of the program have gone on to work in writers' rooms at Netflix, HBO and CBC.

"These writers have ideas worth investing in, and they deserve the chance to see how far those ideas can go," said BSO CEO and co-founder Joan Jenkinson in a statement.

Pictured (L-R) (top row): Edith Kabuya, Kaylyn Johnson, Jezabel Bamberg and Hui Wang

(middle row): Adnan Khan, Omatta Udalor, JP Larocque and Tiffany Hsiung

(bottom row): Vincent Shiao, Zecharias Zelalem and Bernard Gray

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