



CATACLYSM. BEGINS:

the catalyst

/ˈkɑdləst/

a person or thing that provokes or precipitates an event.

PRESSKIT



World created by Sarah Beim

Log-Line

Queer twins of a deceased political figure become the unwanted face/scapegoat for a rebellion against a government that threatens to take their basic human rights to build their false utopia.



Synopsis

'cataclysm.begins: The Catalyst' is a surreal short film that follows the mind of 17-year-old Catalina Maevery as she fights to regain control of her own the narrative as the government, the Conclave, tries to contain a growing rebellion threatening their controlling fragile system by trying to paint her fathers death as an accident when she believes more forces are at play. The morning announcements, while misrepresenting his death, also introduce us to Catalina and her twin brother Xavien in ways that question what is reality.



Production NOTES



Color 4:18 minutes Sony FS7 2.39:1 Aspect Ratio Proof of Concept LGBTQIA+Dystopian

Directed by katherine filaseta

Written by Sarah Beim & katherine filaseta

Produced by Maria Palacio

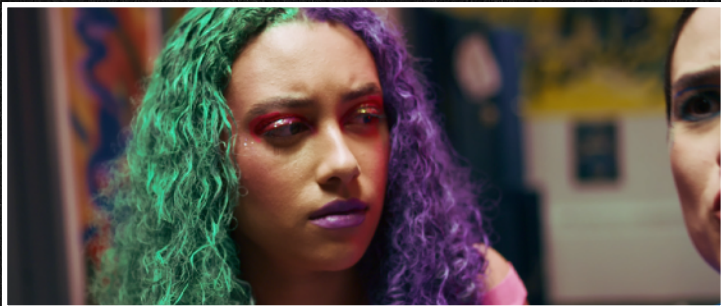
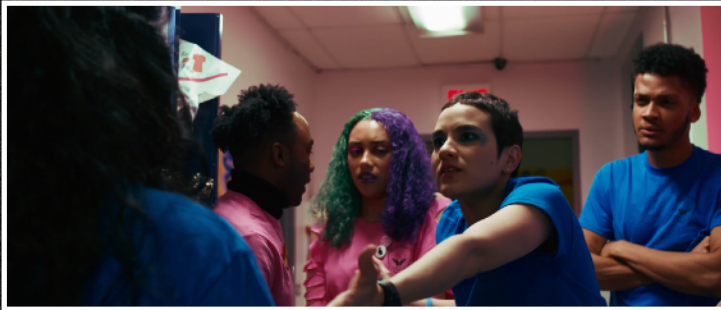
Production Company Beim-ish Productions LLC

Edited by Sarah Beim

Director of Photography Caroline Stucky

Visual Effects Jonny Servais

STILLS



CHARACTERS



Catalina Maevary

17, female, fierce, unafraid of her emotions, and a bit of a brat. Catalina is bold, fierce, defiant, but is also in many ways just a very typical teenager trying to figure out her place and identity in a world where that timeline of youth that she has to figure herself out feels like it is quickly ticking away.

Lennon

17, non-binary, full of spunk and practical knowledge. Catalina's best friend, comes from a poorer financial background than the twins, and their family lives in the lower sector. They come to Catalina's rescue regularly with both practical and emotional support. Eventually, when riots break out, Lennon has to choose between their best friend and their class and family loyalty.



Xavien Maevary

17, male, naive and reserved in public, but can hold his own against his sister when she throws a fit. The story is a battle for the audience's attention between Xavien and his twin sister, Catalina, as they deal with the aftermath of their father's suspicious death, while also dealing with coming of age in a time where his rights as a gay man are threatened.

Noah Archwell

17, gay, is balancing supporting the man he loves and the pressures put on him by his politician father.

Helena Knightengale

30's, serious, but motherly - to an almost creepy extent. a high-ranking government official (the twins' father's coworker!) whose motivations are torn between helping the twins after their father dies, and staying loyal to the corrupt government she works for who may have killed him.



CAST



Aria Martinez is a versatile actor with roles ranging from Antigone to starring as an adaptation of Harley Quinn in the Award Winning Music Video "Quinn" by KNoWTe.

She has experience across film, theater, and new media, demonstrating a dynamic range of skills in dramatic and comedic roles.

Her formal training consists of Manhattan's very own The Barrow Group and LS Acting Studios as well as a degree in Cinema Production & Film Analysis, showcasing a well-rounded background in both performance and the technical aspects of film.

Aria's experience and training makes her a versatile and engaging performer, equipped to tackle a variety of challenging roles.



Cristina Obando Sanchez (she/they) is a Colombian-born, Brooklyn-based actor and singer. She has traveled North America with the USO Show Troupe (dir. Janine DiVita) entertaining active military and veterans, most recently originating the role of Marisol in the first nat'l tour of DOT DOT DOT: A New Musical (prod. TheaterWorksUSA; dir. Jesca Prudecio) based on NYT best-selling illustrator Peter H. Reynolds CREATRILOGY series. Everywhere they go, they carry the greatest lesson from their father: "Mirando al frente, Cristina." Always looking ahead.
Website: cristinaxlt.com



Amiere A. Bell (He/ Him) currently resides in Queens, NY due to him being a Military child. He has had the opportunity to live all around the world including Germany! He is a recent Graduate of SUNY Potsdam and the prestigious Neighborhood Playhouse School of The Theater, where he studied in the Meisner Technique founded by the Stanford Meisner!

Acting wise, he recently performed in Queens in the One Act Play festival at the Secret Theatre with a new Play titled, Dancing without Touching written by Julia Trueblood. He played a college student named Matthew Sol.

Amiere's main goal is to inspire black and brown children with a learning disability like himself, who has dyslexia. He states that there are not enough POC actors and models that have dyslexia on our screens and stages and that he would wholeheartedly love to be that representation. He is a firm believer that you must keep striving and never give up no matter the obstacles you are faced with because you must be resilient no matter how much the odds are stacked against you.



Sam Vukic (he/him) is a rising third-year student at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts where he studies acting.

When he is not in the middle of nowhere in North Carolina, he lives in New York City. He is also a playwright. He has won several national competitions and is published by Smith & Kraus.



Ami Sheth (she/her) is an actor that has had major Film, TV and Print success in both the United States and India.

She has acted in films including the recent SXSW Critics Choice Winning Film "Last Beautiful Island" and the TV Shows "Dietland" (AMC), "Bull" (CBS), "Blue Bloods" (CBS) and most recently was found on the Hit NBC TV show "Blindspot" as Chief FBI lab tech Afreen (Seasons 3,4,5)

team



Sarah Beim

IP Creator / Script Supervisor /
Wardrobe / Editor

Sarah Beim (Beim-ish Productions LLC) (she/her) is a freelance assistant editor / editor who has worked on a vast variety of projects ranging in format and genre. She loves working on stories with a message and heart behind it that leaves a lasting impact.

Sarah has always been fascinated by dreams, sci-fi, and dystopian. These genres inspired me to create my own unique worlds. A lot of my works are inspired by real-world issues but with a twist, as a way to escape but still shed light on issues that need to be addressed.

katherine filaseta (she/her) is a queer female filmmaker based in NYC. While most of her work has been as an assistant director, when she is in the director's chair herself, katherine enjoys exploring the way every different type of art combines via film to tell stories - especially stories from marginalized points of view.

katherine has directed three episodes of Black Panties, a web series celebrating the beauty and intuition of Black women in all their forms, as well as a PSA about street harassment reappropriating Gnarl's Barkley's Crazy from the point of view of a woman walking down the street. She is also in post-production on two music videos with singer/songwriter Megn for her post-Trump-era album about community struggles and women's empowerment, and is in post-production on a documentary, Carol and I, about the way the loss of control brought about by dementia transformed her grandmother's relationship with both her family and herself.

Outside of film, katherine also enjoys reading, tweeting, dancing to Bollywood music, and snuggling her bunny.



katherine filaseta

Director



Maria Palacio

Producer

Maria Palacio (she/her), is a Brooklyn-based filmmaker & photographer who was inspired through her own experience as an up-and-coming filmmaker to create a forum to nurture other emerging artists in the field by establishing Revolution Me Film Festival in 2016. With the experience in assisting in the coordination for the big mini media film festival at Long Island University during her graduate tenure, she used the skills and knowledge in turning the Revolution Me Film Festival into an annual event, attracting filmmakers from all over the world.

Maria is now working on her first directed/co-produced documentary, The Fighter In Us. Her documentary series is one of 89 recipients of the 2022 NYC Women's Fund.

Maria holds an MGA & BA in media arts with a focus in screenwriting and directing from Long Island University.

Additional



Caroline Mariko Stucky **Director of Photography**

Camille 'Mack' M. Harris **Hair & Make-up**

Brandon Manderville **Location Sound Mixer**

Sheldon Walker **Gaffer**

Kelly Polk **Production Designer**

Ronisha Marksman **Production Designer Assistant**

Marlon Anthony **Production Designer Assistant/Extra**

Julian Huerta **Production Assistant /Devin**

Lan Lan **Production Assistant/Extra**

George Carrillo **Production Assistant**

Chrismailyn De Jesus **Extra**

Alicia Harwel **Alyx**

Madison Cu **Ash**

Diana Foronda **Assistant Editor**

Jonny Servais **VFX**

Zee Reichgut **Colorist**

Nicole Maupin **Post Sound Designer**

Knowte Worthy **End Credit Song**

Writers Statement



I am a freelancer and as of last year, I run a solely independent/self-funded non-union production called Beim-ish Productions LLC. My mission with my films is to give the underrepresented a voice. As a queer Jewish filmmaker with a disability, I understand how it feels to be misrepresented in the media and want to change that. When I create a film, I try to make sure that not just the stories told have representation and diversity but also that the people I hire to bring these stories to life in front and behind the camera come from all walks of life.

My artistic approach to LGBTQ+ storytelling is authenticity and respect for the subject I am talking about in the film that I am making. I talk with those in the community, research, watch movies, and constantly learn. As the writer, I've made sure to have sensitive readers give their input and that the people whose communities are mentioned have looked over what I have written to make sure I am representing them correctly and in a positive way.

I started building this world and telling this story during Trump's first presidency then after a few months break during the pandemic at a time I didn't know how to get my feelings out and needed an outlet. As these characters were figuring themselves out, so was I. I was not out of the closet yet (pansexual) and researching, talking with friends who were out, and removing toxic people from my life who held me back, I started to learn the side of me that I hadn't let myself explore before and it truly changed my life. These characters started to become mirroring people I knew and learning about the beauty and community of the LGBTQIA+ community, I found where I belonged. Now years later I am finally comfortable in my own skin, I found an amazingly supportive community and this project has been a safety net and an outline to channel my frustration that even in 2025 we are going backward with LGBTQIA+ rights. We fought and won before, we will again.

Directors Statement



Growing up with younger siblings and spending a few years after college teaching, young adult fiction has always been an important part of my life, where I've been able to see its effects manifesting in real time. I truly believe that the media we consume when we are younger shapes our perceptions of ourselves and helps us figure out our role in society. I love *cataclysm.begins* because it brings a perspective to the dystopian genre that we haven't seen before—queer kids, specifically, trying to find that place in a rapidly changing world that is exaggerated, of course, but also not much different from our own. As someone who didn't even realize her queerness until her mid-20s (watching the amazing documentary *Girl on Girl* by Jodi Savitz)—a full decade after first developing a huge crush on Selena Gomez in *Wizards of Waverly Place*—it's so important to me to give younger generations a place to own their queerness earlier than I was able to own mine. I'm very excited to bring the sibling dynamic of my own teenage years authentically into the relationship of Catalina and Xavien, as well, because I think authentic sibling relationships are also underrepresented. It will be refreshing to see the love between these two differently queer siblings as they struggle for control of the narrative—my way of showing a struggle for parents' attention through the same fight for the audience's attention. And, of course, none of this is only for teens; through the diversity of the story Sarah has written, I think adults of all ages, too, will find a bit of themselves represented in the characters of *cataclysm.begins* in a way they haven't gotten to see themselves before.

Visit our website

<http://cataclysmbegins.com/>

