

JEWELLE: A Just Vision

PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY MADELEINE LIM



“You have to be able to imagine a better world, to get to a better world.
That’s why I like writing.” – Jewelle Gomez

USA, 64 minutes

PRESS INQUIRES:

communications@qwocmap.org

DISTRIBUTION INQUIRIES:

distribution@qwocmap.org

(415) 752-0868

1014 Torney Avenue, Suite 111, San Francisco, CA 94129

jewellefilm.org

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/709232598>

***JEWELLE: A Just Vision* | SYNOPSIS**



SHORT SYNOPSIS

From Black Power in late-60s Boston, to AIDS activism in mid-80s New York, to Marriage Equality in early-10s San Francisco, *JEWELLE: A Just Vision* shines a joyful and hope-filled spotlight on award-winning novelist, playwright, essayist, poet, and journalist Jewelle Gomez.

An Ioway and Wampanoag, Black and Cape Verdean, femme lesbian, Jewelle co-founded decades-old social justice organizations that are more relevant than ever. Expansive in her creative imagination, inclusive in her philanthropic leadership, and passionate in her lesbian of color feminist ethics, she is an unrelenting torchbearer for the transformative power of the artist as activist.

This intimate portrayal weaves haunting visuals, poignant images and personal papers that illuminate her cultural impact. The soundtrack draws on African American and Native American spiritual and musical traditions. It drinks deeply from a life of art and activism, and anchors Jewelle's personal struggles at the confluence of social movements.

LONG SYNOPSIS

From Black Power in late-60s Boston, to AIDS activism in mid-80s New York, to Marriage Equality in early-10s San Francisco, *JEWELLE: A Just Vision* (64 mins, 2022) from award-winning filmmaker Madeleine Lim, shines a joyful and hope-filled spotlight on novelist, playwright, essayist, poet, and journalist Jewelle Gomez.

An Ioway and Wampanoag, African American and Cape Verdean, femme lesbian, Jewelle co-founded decades-old social justice organizations that are more relevant than ever. Expansive in her creative imagination, inclusive in her philanthropic leadership, and passionate in her lesbian of color feminist ethics, she is an unrelenting torchbearer for the transformative power of the artist as activist.

Author of the prescient 1991 novel *The Gilda Stories*, this double Lambda Literary Award winner shaped the emergence of Afro- and Indigenous futurisms through the journey of the titular lesbian vampire, from 1850s slavery era through 2050s climate catastrophe. Jewelle's plays reclaim queer Black ancestors, writer James Baldwin in *Waiting for Giovanni* (2011) and singer Alberta Hunter in *Leaving the Blues* (2017), to reimagine history. Her poems in *Still Water* (2022) shape our understanding of Native American heritage, identity, and relationships.

JEWELLE: A Just Vision weaves hauntingly spare gothic visuals that illuminate passages from the novel with stirring play performances, riveting book readings, celebratory news events, sultry interludes and cherished moments at home, a treasure trove of personal papers and photos, and incisive interviews with artists, activists, and scholars.

The all-star cast features Dorothy Allison, author of *Bastard Out of Carolina*; Ajuan Mance, professor of African American literature; Brian Freeman, playwright and co-founder of Afro Pomo Homos; Cheryl Clarke, poet and former Rutgers University professor; Crystal Jang, co-founder of Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women and Transgender Community; Jennifer DeVere Brody, Stanford University professor of Theater & Performance Studies; Katherine Acey, Executive Director Emerita of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice; Kim Shuck, San Francisco Poet Laureate and Cherokee artist; Nancy Bereano, founder of Firebrand Books; and Troy Rockett, artist and actor.

The soundtrack draws on African American and Native American spiritual and musical traditions that resonate with grief and healing, and ring with love and laughter. Melanie DeMore, 3-time Grammy nominee, and Allegra Bandy, singer and composer, birth a soulful a cappella score. Additionally, the soundtrack features Toshi Reagon, musician and composer of the *Parable of the Sower* Octavia Butler opera; Ferron, singer-songwriter and Juno Award nominee; and Ulali, an Indigenous women's vocal group and Juno Award nominee.

JEWELLE: A Just Vision is an intimate portrayal that drinks deeply from a life of art and activism, and anchors Jewelle's personal struggles at the confluence of social movements, to gift humanity with fierce hope.

MADELEINE LIM
PRODUCER & DIRECTOR of *JEWELLE: A Just Vision*



Madeleine Lim is an award-winning filmmaker with over 25 years of experience as a producer, director, cinematographer and editor. Her films have screened at sold-out theaters at international film festivals around the world, including the Vancouver International Film Festival, Mill Valley Film Festival, and Amsterdam Amnesty International Film Festival. Her work has been featured at universities and museums like the de Young, and Asian Art in San Francisco, and Crocker Art in Sacramento, and broadcast to millions on PBS.

Lim's films have received awards from the prestigious and highly competitive Paul Robeson Independent Media Fund, as well as the Frameline Film Completion Fund. She received the 1997 Award of Excellence from the San Jose Film & Video Commission's Joey Awards and won the 1998 National Educational Media Network Bronze Apple Award. From 2000 to 2003, she was a California Arts Council Artist-in-Residence. The Featured Filmmaker at the 2006 APature Asian American Arts Festival, Lim has four times been awarded the San Francisco Arts Commission Individual Artist Commission for her films. She received grants from the Community Story Fund from Cal Humanities and the San Francisco Foundation Bay Area Documentary Fund for her film, *The Worlds of Bernice Bing* (2013), which won the Audience Award at the 2013 Queer Women of Color Film Festival. She holds a BA in Cinema from San Francisco State University, where she was awarded Outstanding Cinema Student of the Year.

From 2004 to 2020, Madeleine was an Adjunct Professor in the Film/Media Studies Department at the University of San Francisco.

At the age of 23, Lim escaped persecution by the Singaporean government for her organizing work as a young lesbian artist-activist. Ten years later, she created the award-winning documentary *Sambal Belacan in San Francisco* (1997), a film that is still banned in Singapore for its exploration of race, sexuality and nationality. As one of a small number of queer women of color filmmakers on the international film festival circuit in the late 1990s, she saw that only queer women of color would tell their own authentic stories. QWOCCMAP is the result of her vision and she founded the organization in 2000 with the belief that a community of artist-activist filmmakers could change the face of filmmaking and the social justice movement.

Under Lim's leadership, QWOCCMAP's Filmmaker Training Program was awarded 2003 Best Video Program by San Francisco Community Media. In 2005, Lim received the LGBT Local Hero Award from KQED-TV in recognition of her leadership of QWOCCMAP and her dedicated service to the queer women of color community. She was awarded the 2007 DreamSpeaker Award from Purple Moon Dance Project and the 2010 Phoenix Award from APIQWTC for her outstanding, sustained and pioneering contributions to the Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women & Transgender Community. She received the 2011 Bayard Rustin Civil Rights Award from the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club for her leadership in advancing justice and equality for the LGBT community. She was honored with the 2013 State Farm Good Neighbor Award presented by Equality California for her extraordinary commitment to her work and the LGBT community. In 2015, she won the Queer LifeSpace Artist On The Ground award in recognition for her work contributing to positive mental health for LGBTQ women of color. In 2021, Lim received the Lifetime Achievement in Community Building Award from the Chinese Culture Center in recognition of her deep impact and unwavering commitment to empowering future generations of storytellers and working toward a more just and equitable future for all. Throughout the past 20 years, her leadership has been recognized by members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the California State Senate and California State Assembly, and the SF Board of Supervisors.

***JEWELLE: A Just Vision* | DIRECTOR STATEMENT**

In 1987, at the age of 23, I came to the U.S. to escape Singaporean government arrests of dissidents (artists, lawyers, educators). A decade later, I wrote, directed, and produced the award-winning mixed-genre documentary *Sambal Belacan in San Francisco* (1997). To this day, it remains banned by the Singapore government for its exploration of nationality, race, and sexuality. In 2021, the ban was lifted for an in-person screening to an audience of 33 people; I have hopes now that Section 377A is repealed that the film can finally be screened in Singapore.

I am influenced artistically by 5th generation Chinese filmmakers Zhang Yimou, and Chen Kaige, prolific Hong Kong auteur Wong Kar Wai, and British filmmakers Ismail Merchant and James Ivory. I am inspired by their aesthetic to combine stunning and sensual visuals in which emotion is saturated with color, texture, and light. My cinematic style embodies my own cultural aesthetics as a Peranakan Chinese filmmaker.

I am also creatively influenced by queer filmmakers of color Pratibha Parmar, Isaac Julien, and the late Marlon Riggs. I push genre boundaries to transform and inform my craft. I combine lush lyricism with poignant portraits, and timely and relevant themes: queer immigrants, survivors of domestic violence, Muslim youth living in America.

Since the 90s, I have defied the traditional anthropological roots of documentary by ethically telling stories from an insider's intimate perspective. My career has evolved by centering and being accountable to community. With over 25 years of experience as a producer, director, cinematographer and editor, I strive to understand self, heritage, and belonging. I explore the ways in which, as Jewelle Gomez says "...art evoked political ideas...there are times in history when you have to act." My creative vision is to highlight the lives of queer women of color, and reclaim the legacy and impact of queer women of color feminist art and culture, and theory and praxis. In doing so, I soulfully evoke the interconnections of identity and issues embodied in the everyday spirit and triumph of real people.

– Madeleine Lim

ABOUT JEWELLE GOMEZ & *JEWELLE: A Just Vision*

Jewelle On The Big Screen: “You Have to Imagine A Better World to Get to A Better World”

By Dawn Ennis | GLAAD, June 10, 2022

<https://www.glaad.org/blog/jewelle-big-screen>

Envisioning Black and Indigenous Futures with ‘Jewelle’

By Kebo Drew, CFRE, Managing Director at QWOCMAP | Black Girl Nerds

<https://blackgirlnerds.com/envisioning-black-and-indigenous-futures-with-jewelle/>

***JEWELLE: A Just Vision* | CONTACT INFORMATION**

PRESS CONTACT INFORMATION

QWOCMAP is happy to arrange interviews with Jewelle Gomez and Madeleine Lim, Producer & Director of *JEWELLE: A Just Vision*.

communications@qwocmap.org

DISTRIBUTION CONTACT INFORMATION

distribution@qwocmap.org

(415) 752-0868

1014 Torney Avenue, Suite 111, San Francisco, CA 94129

***JEWELLE: A Just Vision* | CREDITS**

PRODUCED & DIRECTED by Madeleine Lim

Executive Producer: Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project (QWOCMAP)

Co-Producers: T. Kebo Drew & Ruth Gumnit

Directors of Photography: Madeleine Lim & Ruth Gumnit

Editors: Corey Ohama & Elizabeth Finlayson

Music Composers: Allegra Bandy & Melanie DeMore

Cast:

Ajuan Mance, professor of African American literature

Brian Freeman, playwright and co-founder of Afro Pomo Homos

Cheryl Clarke, poet and former Rutgers University professor

Crystal Jang, co-founder of Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women and Transgender Community

Denise DeJean, friend

Diane Sabin, beloved spouse

Dorothy Allison, author of *Bastard Out of Carolina*

Jennifer DeVere Brody, Stanford University professor of Theater & Performance Studies

Katherine Acey, Executive Director Emerita of the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice

Kim Shuck, San Francisco Poet Laureate and Cherokee artist

Nancy Bereano, founder of Firebrand Books

Phillip LeClaire, brother

Troy Rockett, artist and actor

Major Funders:

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Dave Hopmann & Jim Taul

Elana Dykewomon

Fleishhacker Foundation

Horizons Foundation

Janis Medina

Old Lesbians Organizing For Change (OLOC)
Open Meadows Foundation

JEWELLE: A Just Vision | STILLS





JEWELLE: A Just Vision | POSTER

***You have to be able to imagine a
better world to get to a better world.***

***Jewelle* : A JUST VISION**
A MADELEINE LIM FILM

Producer & Director MADELEINE LIM | Co-Producers T. KEBO DREW and RUTH GUMNIT
Directors of Photography MADELEINE LIM and RUTH GUMNIT | Editors ELIZABETH FINLAYSON and COREY OHAMA
Music Composers ALLEGRA BANDY and MELANIE DEMORE

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