



HUNGRY EYES MEDIA

a film by JENNIFER HOLNESS



# SUBJECTS *of* DESIRE



PRESS KIT

# SUBJECTS *of* DESIRE

Written and Directed by Jennifer Holness  
Produced by Jennifer Holness and Sudz Sutherland  
2021 | 101 minutes  
Hungry Eyes Media  
Original version English

## SYNOPSIS

Subjects of Desire explores the cultural shift in North American beauty standards towards embracing Black female aesthetics and features while exposing the deliberate and often dangerous portrayals of Black women in the media.

From society's new fixation on the 'booty', fuller lips, the dramatic rise of spray tanned skin, ethnic hairstyles, and athletic bodies, some argue that Black women are having a beauty moment. But others, primarily Black women, argue that traditional Black features and attributes are seen as more desirable when they are on White women.

Told from the POV of women who aren't afraid to challenge conventional beauty standards, the film explores the positive and negative portrayals of Black women in media and asks what is the impact today?

Weaving through the past and present, Subjects of Desire is a culturally significant, provocative film that deconstructs what we understand about race and the power behind beauty.



# PRESS & AWARDS



## AWARDS

Best Feature Film	- Black Harvest Film Festival
Top 10 Audience Award	- Hot Docs
Cultural Spirit Award	- New Hope Film Festival
Best Documentary	- DC Black Film Festival
Best Documentary	- San Francisco Black Film Festival
DOXX Award for Best Documentary	- Tallgrass Film Festival
Best Documentary	- CineFAM Film Festival
Canada's Top 10 Films	- Toronto International Film Festival
Inspirational Griot Award	- Emerging Lens Cultural Film Festival

## NOMINATIONS

Grand Jury Award for Best Documentary	- SXSW
Best Documentary	- Bentonville Film Festival
Best Canadian Documentary	- Calgary International Film Festival
Mind the Gap Award	- Mill Valley Film Festival
Spirit Award	- Mill Valley Film Festival
Gordan Parks Black Excellence in Filmmaking	- Tallgrass Film Festival
Best Documentary Audience Award	- American Black Film Festival
Best Documentary Feature	- Denton Black Film Festival
Best Documentary Feature	- Pan African Film Festival
Best Writing	- Writers Guild of Canada Awards

## FESTIVALS

**SXSW**, Hot Docs, **San Francisco Black Film Festival**, New Hope Film Festival, **Bentonville Film Festival**, New Haven Film Festival, **DC Black Film Festival**, Regent Park Film Festival, **ReFrame Film Festival**, FIN Atlantic Film Festival, **Trinidad + Tobago Film Festival**, Montreal Black Film Festival, **Calgary Film Festival**, Edmonton International Film Festival, **Mill Valley Film Festival**, St. John International Women's Film Festival, **Tallgrass Film Festival**, Twin Cities Black Film Festival, **CineFAM Film Festival**, Raindance Film Festival, **American Black Film Festival**, Denver Film Festival, **DOC NYC**, Rocky Mountain Women's Film Festival, **British Urban Film Festival**, Denton Black Film Festival, Victoria Film Festival, Pan African Film Festival, **Barcelona Fashion Documentary Film Festival**

## PRESS

| [ABC Chicago](#) | [E Talk](#) | [NOW Toronto](#) | [CBC](#) | [The Toronto Star](#) | [Variety](#) | [Front Porch](#) | [The Hollywood Reporter](#) | [Alliance of Women Film Journalists](#) | [NOW Toronto](#) | [Dope Interviews](#) | [Awards Radar](#) | [The Mary Sue](#) | [Roger Ebert](#) | [That Shelf](#) | [View From The Dark](#) | [Culture Mix](#) | [But Why Tho \(Interview\)](#) | [But Why Tho \(Review\)](#) | [By Blacks](#) | [POV Magazine](#) | [Toronto Caribbean Newspaper](#) | [The Daily Texan](#) | [She Does The City](#) |



## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I grew up feeling like I was outside the norm of conventional beauty. I had smooth chocolate skin, 4C hair and while I was considered nice looking, I rarely found products that enhanced my looks. Luckily, I was confident at being a 'natural,' and have literally jumped for joy over the past decade as products for Black women became plentiful and fantastic. As significant, Black women and girls started to embrace their beauty and the world began to emulate, buy, borrow and appropriate Black aesthetics. That's when I realized I wanted to understand the structures behind the beauty standards we all accept. I also wanted to deconstruct why so many of us grew up feeling hurt, insecure and sometimes ugly. I wanted to be a part of telling our story as Black women and why our beauty holds power.

I am blessed with three beautiful daughters and over the years I've watched them develop into glorious young ladies and my hopes and dreams for them have soared. Over the years, I've watched them develop into glorious young ladies and my hopes and dreams for them have soared. Like many mothers, I also want to protect them from the pain I felt growing up, before I grew into loving the skin I'm in. Then 5 years ago, a surprising thing happened my girls began to tell me how many of their non-Black friends coveted their beauty. Big booty – they want that. Fuller lips, – they are getting products for that, slim fit, slim-thick, small waists to full hips ratio, they are working out for that, baby hairs, braids and extensions – they are buying that. Beyonce, Rihanna, Lupita Nyong'o, even Naomi Campbell (this lady does not age), women who are considered the creme of the crop in beauty, belong in our camp. And yes white beauty standards have remained dominant, but an interesting shift is unfolding too. That's when I began to understand that while many things remained the same from my youth, a great deal has changed too. I want to tell the story of whys and how this is unfolding.

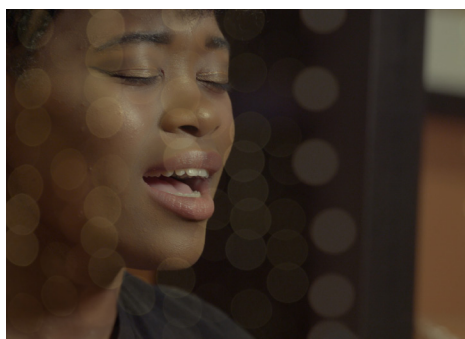
## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

| HOLLYWOOD REPORTER'S NEXT BIG THING | WIFT'S CRYSTAL AWARD WINNER FOR CREATIVE EXCELLENCE | AFROGLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT AWARD | TVO BLACK HISTORY MONTH AMBASSADOR | CMPA PRODUCER OF THE YEAR AWARD | FEATURED ON THE IMDB INSTAGRAM PAGE ALONG WITH YANCE FORD, QUESTLOVE, DAWN PORTER, AND RAOUL PECK AS ONE OF FIVE BLACK FILMMAKERS TO WATCH |



# PHOTO GALLERY

DOWNLOAD ALL SUBJECTS OF  
DESIRE PHOTOS HERE



## VIDEO CLIPS

CLIPS ARE AVAILABLE TO  
DOWNLOAD ON VIMEO



# TEAM

## JENNIFER HOLNESS

*Director, Writer, and Producer*

Jen Holness is a happy workaholic. She writes, produces, and directs, often on the same project. She is the first Black woman to win a Canadian Screen Award (Gemini) for Best Writing, is the 2021 Indiescreen Producer of the Year and a 2022 Women in Film & Television (WIFT) Creative Excellence Award winner, and most recently, is the 2023 Toronto Black Film Festival's 2023 Career Achievement Award recipient.

Her recent feature documentary, *Subjects of Desire*, has won numerous festival awards and was a 2021 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) Canada's Top 10 Films (2021). Her TV series include *Shoot The Messenger* and *Guns*, with the latter winning 5 CSA's and garnering a prestigious Rose d'Or nomination. Her narrative feature films, *Home Again* and *Love, Sex and Eating the Bones* have screened around the globe, with *Bones* winning a Best First Feature award at TIFF. She co-directed the documentary *Speakers for The Dead* (CBC) and produced *Badge of Pride* (CBC & PBS), *Brick by Brick* (Omni), *Yin Yin Jade Love* (TVO).

She is a Founder and the Inaugural Chair of the Black Screen Office, and is an Executive Board Member of the Canadian Media Producers Association. Jen has three incredible daughters, two smallish dogs and one very tall husband.

## SUDZ SUTHERLAND

*Producer*

Sudz works on both sides of the fence as a freelance writer and director for TV dramas and feature films. Some of his most recent work include Netflix's *Ginny and Georgia*, *Superman and Lois*, and CBC's *For The Record*. Sudz's feature film, *Home Again*, won the prestigious PAFF BAFTA Festival Choice Award in Los Angeles and was nominated for Best Direction from the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC). *Home Again* is the follow up to his multiple award winning and Genie nominated debut feature film *Love, Sex and Eating the Bones*. His Dramatic series 'Shoot the Messenger,' with writer/producer Jennifer Holness was aired on the CBC. Sudz is currently developing a comedy series for CFC-Netflix, *#relationshipgoals*, and will be producing and directing on a powerful new documentary series, *BLK: An Origin Story*, that he co-created about lost Black History in Canada.





## **IRIS NG**

### *Cinematographer*

Iris Ng is recognized as a versatile cinematographer, who lends her patience, creativity, intuition, and skill to bring a director's vision to the screen. For over a decade, Iris has collaborated with award-winning directors Sarah Polley, Min Sook Lee, Fredrik Gertten, Vikram Jayanti, Michelle Latimer, and Martha Burns on a variety of documentaries while shooting a wide variety of films for artists such as Chris Curreri, Oliver Husain, Bambitchell, and Richard Fung. After obtaining her BFA in Film Production from York University, she has honed her craft shooting over sixty projects in many facets of the industry, from narrative, art and documentary films to commercials, music videos and episodic television. In the process, she has had the opportunity to work in Asia, Africa, Europe, and across North America. While her work has been screened in festivals and installations around the world, Iris' goal continues to be to capture the essence of the moment in the medium, regardless of the size of the project.

## **RICARDO DIAZ**

### *Cinematographer*

Ricardo specializes in feature films, documentaries, lifestyle T.V., commercials and music videos. He is an expert in all formats. Ricardo is known for his talent for lighting and for his quiet and professional demeanour on set; while having fun at the same time. If you know Ricardo, then you know his love of "Juicy Fruit"! His talents have not gone unnoticed; on the contrary, Ricardo has been recognized in the industry and has many awards under his belt. Ricardo is a husband and the proud father of three children, consistently volunteering his time and energy to helping aspiring filmmakers.



## **LAWRENCE JACKMAN**

### *Editor*

Lawrence Jackman is a Toronto-based filmmaker. Over the past fifteen years he has worked as director, editor and consultant on many award-winning documentaries and dramas. He was the director of *How Does It Feel* (2011) and co-director of *A Better Man* (2017).



## A. "TEDDI JONES" TJERNAGEL

*Composer*

Teddi Jones (A. Tjernagel), is a singer-songwriter and music producer from Vancouver, Canada. Her accredited work extends to Summer Walker (Over It), Buddy (She Think), \$NOT (Fall In Love, Revenge, Demanding) and G-Eazy feat. Rick Ross (Lifestyles of the Rich & Hated). Teddi's sound ranges from mysterious, chopped singing-vocals to the creative use of analog instruments including guitars, pianos and more. She is known for her creations of production-ready instrumental samples.



## TYLER EVANS

*Associate Producer*

Tyler is a director, screenwriter and producer based in Toronto, Ontario. During his childhood, to escape the mundanity of the suburbs, he would go to the theatres weekly, which is where he discovered his love for storytelling and filmmaking. Tyler graduated from Sheridan College with a Bachelor's degree in Film and Television. After graduation, Tyler's first short film Teething (2019) was accepted into 2019's Reelworld Film Festival. He wrote, directed, produced and edited the film. He is currently in pre-production of his second short film, I Live Here which he has received funding from Ontario Arts Council, NFB and CBC. Tyler's main goal is to create grounded and humanizing films about black people and people of colour. He is currently writing his first feature film and continues to be a student of the craft.



## ELISE WHITTINGTON

*Associate Producer*

Elise Whittington has 5 years of experience within the film and television industry as well as a diversified background in the arts and general management. She has considerable experience in providing business affairs and project management support for every stage of a project's life cycle. Elise utilizes her innate sense of creativity in a multitude of ways and specifically in her strategic approach to project development in its early stages. Her expertise lies in the execution of the application process for all levels of funding, from assistance and preparation of all necessary documents to contract management, submission, and long-term management of each project. Elise holds a M.B.A. from the Schulich School of business. Elise Whittington has 5 years of experience within the film and television industry as well as a diversified background in the arts and general management.





# HUNGRY EYES MEDIA

Hungry Eyes Media is co-founded by the dynamic creative duo of Jen Holness and Sudz Sutherland. Sutherland and Holness bring a fresh, authentic perspective to telling powerful, thought-provoking stories. In doing so, they have racked up numerous national and international awards and accolades. Hungry Eyes recently expanded its focus to develop content for mobile users as well. As a company with its own distinct mission plan, Hungry Eyes seeks to inspire and entertain!

## CREDITS

Featuring  
**Ryann Richardson**  
**Alexandra Germaine**  
**Seraiah Nicole**  
**Brittany Lewis**

**India Arie**  
**Jully Black**  
**Rachael Dolezal**  
**Amanda Parris**

**Dr. Cheryl Thompson**  
**Dr. Carolyn West**  
**Dr. Heather Widdows**

**Kaya Joubert Johnson**  
**Charli Proudfoot**  
**Daeja Sutherland**  
**Rayne Sutherland**  
**Torie Williams**

Written and Directed by  
**Jennifer Holness**

Narrator  
**Garvia Bailey**

Producer  
**Jennifer Holness**

Producer  
**Sudz Sutherland**

Directors of Photography  
**Iris Ng**  
**Ricardo Diaz**

Music Composer  
**A. "Teddi Jones" Tjernagel**

Music Consultant  
**Tom Third**

Archivist  
**Tanya Fleet**

Researcher  
**Hoda Ali**

Associate Producers  
**Tyler Evans**  
**Elise Whittington**

Production Manager  
**Samantha Kaine**  
**Krista Mitchell**

Sound Recordist  
**Tim Lue**

Additional Sound Recordist  
**Edward O'Connor**  
**Jeffrey Reyes**  
**Richard Gott**

Make-Up Artists  
**Nicole Pilon**  
**Elizabeth Taylor**  
**Gemma Masters**  
**Tiffany Peters**

Hair Stylists  
**Chantelle Hinds**  
**Nikki Zalanka**  
**Patience Barton**



HUNGRY EYES MEDIA

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Produced with the participation of Telefilm Canada Fund



Produced with the participation of Ontario Creates



Produced with the Participation of Rogers Documentary Fund



Produced in association with



A division of Bell Media Inc.



**Canada  
Media Fund**

Produced with the assistance of the Hot Docs Ted Rogers Fund



Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit

