

New York Television Festival Announces Independent Pilot Competition Selections

By [Elizabeth Wagmeister](#)



The New York Television Festival has announced the official selections for the Independent Pilot Competition, *Variety* has learned exclusively.

This year, a record 63 pilots have been chosen from the largest pool of submissions to date. The pilots, which will be presented to industry executives and TV fans at the 12th annual fest this October, are projects for television and digital series.

“We were blown away by the talent and creativity of this year’s submissions — across the board it was a record-setting year and we had an extremely difficult task in identifying the competition slate,” said Terence Gray, founder and executive director of the [NYTVF](#). “As the TV landscape has evolved and become more competitive over the last decade, we’ve endeavored to complement that growth by cultivating new voices; engaging the industry; and creating a pipeline of opportunities on all sides of the episodic spectrum to maximize the potential of the indie TV community.”

The 2016 selections come from diverse content creators with 59% of the selections hailing from women in prominent roles (creator, writer, director, exec producer), and 43% hailing from persons of color in the core creative team or principal cast. Nine of the pilots feature LGBTQ narratives, four showcase Asian-American themes, seven are animated projects and 39 are comedy series.

[NYTVF](#)’s Independent Pilot Competition alumni have gone on to work on HBO’s “Animals” and CW’s “No Tomorrow,” among other television projects.

The Independent Pilot Competition selections will be presented at the NYTVF, including 42 world festival premieres, from Oct. 24-29 in New York City.

Check out the Independent Pilot Competition Official Selections here:

COMEDY

30, Debt-Free, and Far From Happy

Created by Ellyn Daniels and Ri Versteegh – Los Angeles, CA

Two self-centered, successful women living in Los Angeles desperately seek to fill the voids in their lives with all the wrong men, often leading to disastrous and hilarious consequences.

Featuring Mark Valley (*Girlfriends' Guide to Divorce, Boston Legal*)

Angry Black Women

Created by Dahéli Hall and HaJ House – Los Angeles, CA

This satirical series follows two black women working in Hollywood as they reconcile the ways black women are perceived in society with the unique ways they perceive themselves, poking fun at an openly-biased entertainment industry.

Created by and starring Dahéli Hall (*MADtv*)

Anne and Jake

Created by Victoria Bullock – Los Angeles, CA

When a young, headstrong woman from 1814 London time travels to present-day Los Angeles, she finds herself in the apartment of a quirky physicist responsible for her journey.

Starring Matt Dallas (*Kyle XY, Baby Daddy, Eastwick*)

Brooklyn Sound

Created by Julia Mattison and Noel Carey – Brooklyn, NY

This musical mockumentary follows Lucy, the second-generation owner of Brooklyn Sound, and Joel, the studio's head engineer, as they try to save their legendary recording studio and keep their struggling business afloat. Created by comedy duo Mattison and Carey, who play the studio's owner and head engineer as well as the musical artists seen recording at the studio.

Bucksport For Life!

Created by Mike Camerlengo and James Manzello – New York, NY

Since barely graduating from Bucksport High School in 2002, 34-year-old 'party animal' Henry Galecki has kept the good times rolling, making him a legend in his own mind – and a loser in everyone else's.

Craigslist Therapist

Created by Dean Cates – Los Angeles, CA

Facing divorce and financial ruin, failed burrito-truck owner Steven Wellish steals his ex-wife's identity in an attempt to mount a successful therapy practice.

Starring Robyn Cohen (*Gravity*), Azita Ghanizada (*Alphas, General Hospital*), Mike Still (*College Humor Originals, UCB Originals*)

Curfeud

Created by Jeff Murdoch and Jo Scott – Chicago, IL

Two kooky-but-loving parents try to keep tabs on their endless supply of curfew-breaking adult children in this improv-friendly series featuring a who's who of Chicago comedy.

Guest Starring Claire Mulaney (writer – *Saturday Night Live*), TJ Jagodowski (*TJ and Dave*), Katie Rich (writer – *Saturday Night Live*), Steve Waltien (*The Jamz*, *The Improvised Shakespeare Company*)

Don't Tell Larry

Created by Greg Porper and John Schimke – Los Angeles, CA

Two co-workers go to extreme lengths in order to keep big secrets away from their emotionally unstable colleague, Larry.

Door on the Left

Created by Kati Skelton – Brooklyn, NY

Five female friends are stuck in a blank, purgatorial hellscape and are making the most of their strange and horrifyingly hilarious existence.

F'd

Created by Ryan Gowland – North Hollywood, CA

This apocalyptic comedy follows three people living together in a RV who discover that the end of the world is tough, but living together is just hell.

Guest Starring Craig Cackowski (*Community*, *Veep*, *Drunk History*), Amanda Lund (*Fresh off the Boat*, *Ghost Girls*), Eric Peterson (*Kirstie*, *Shrek the Musical*)

Fransis

Created by Mickey Dwyer – Louisville, KY

In a world where humans and puppets coexist, a troubled and furry latchkey kid crosses paths with an inexperienced child therapist. Fransis and Jackie soon find that they lead different but equally lonely lives, and they both could use a little help.

Geeta's Guide to Moving On

Created by Puja Mohindra – Chicago, IL

After her Indian-American Prince Charming dumps her, heartbroken Geeta Gidwani moves back in with her parents and learns to move on with the help of her family and her friends.

Created by and starring Puja Mohindra (*All My Children*, *Three Rivers*)

Gemma & The Bear!

Created by Kevin R. Free and Eevin Hartsough – New York, NY

This whimsical series about finding love and growing up introduces us to Gemma, a neurotic 30-something woman, and The Bear, her fly-by-the-seat-of-his-pants gay, black man alter ego, who awakens in Gemma's place each night.

Starring Debargo Sanyal (*Sita Sings the Blues*)

Hart of America

Created by Arlen Konopaki and Kevin Gillese – Atlanta, GA

Alcoholic bigfoot, sex-crazed teens, and a hard-nosed murder detective cross paths in the Georgia woods as they each search for what they believe will bring them fulfillment.

Starring Amber Nash (*Archer*, *Frisky Dingo*)

#Hashtagging

Created by Diana Wright – Los Angeles, CA

This #snackable series follows the trials and #tribulations of a #millennial couple trying to navigate the (kinda) #real world and deal with not-so-real-world #problems.

Inappropriate Jane Austen

Created by Alex Trow and Katie Gibson – New York, NY

A gaggle of Regency ladies explore what Jane Austen left out about female friendship, engagements, motherhood, and anal sex. If Jane Austen hadn't been so appropriate, she'd have been... *Inappropriate Jane Austen*.

Guest Starring Laurie Kennedy (*Law & Order*, *Homicide: Life on the Streets*)

Instanews

Created by Pearson Jenks – Brooklyn, NY

The team at Instanews is tasked with one thing: getting clicks in an increasingly clickable world. Will the Instanews crew be able to find the next Grumpy Cat to get the attention they deserve, or will they be shut down due to lack of interest (and lackluster listicles)?

Jana & Shasta

Created by Tynan Delong, Ryan Bennett, and Ana Fabrega – Brooklyn, NY

After winning a radio contest for two round-trip bus tickets to New York City, simple-minded young couple Jana and Shasta leave their hometown of Kissimmee, Florida for the first time ever and head out to the Big Apple.

Julius

Created by Nnamdi Ngwe – Chicago, IL

Lovable, well-meaning service advisor Julius Smith is an unusual selection to be the star of a new reality TV show about his life.

Keith Broke His Leg

Created by Keith Powell – Los Angeles, CA

After an accident strips him of his ability to walk without aid, Keith is forced to see the world in a new way when his wife, his friends, and especially his agent don't make life easy for the incapacitated.

Created by and starring Keith Powell (*30 Rock*) and featuring Malcolm Barrett (*Better Off Ted*), Leonard Robinson (*Wild 'N Out*), Tracey Wigfield (*The Mindy Project*), Alexandra Krosney (*Last Man Standing*), and Fiona Gubelmann (*Wilfred*)

Last Will & Testicle

Created by Byron Lane – Los Angeles, CA

Inspired by true events, a gay man diagnosed with testicular cancer has to tell his quirky friends and family, cope with treatment, and deal with his walking and talking lump of cancer.

Guest Starring Beth Grant (*Pushing Daisies*, *The Mindy Project*) and Drew Droege (“Chloë Sevigny”)

Late Bloomers

Created by Uttera Singh – Los Angeles, CA

This comedy follows a young woman who wants to follow her dreams, and a fanny-pack-clad Indian father hoping that she will follow his.

Starring Brian George (*The Big Bang Theory*, *Seinfeld*)

Murder She Joked

Created by Jared Jeffries – Brooklyn, NY

Standup-detective Gina Palamano uses her skill at early-90's-style observational humor to solve murders.

The Next Four Years

Created by Hunter Arnold and Nick Blaemire – New York, NY

Recent college graduates Phil and Ana try and fail to “make it” in the real world, forcing them to redefine their idea of success in the process.

On the Bright Side

Created by Adam Weinstock, Andy Jones, Alex Whittington, Robert Stephens, and Ben Greene – Los Angeles, CA
When sad-sack Ben inherits his uncle's LA home, his opportunistic best friends take advantage of the unfortunate circumstances, and together they endeavor to seek out the silver lining of their somewhat grim existence.

Poor Todd

Created by Liz Astrof – Los Angeles, CA

A self-proclaimed “low maintenance” pediatric dentist and her long-suffering, under-earning menschy husband deal with everything from humorous daily minutiae to major life struggles like money, career, life insurance, and kids...potentially.

Created by Liz Astrof (*2 Broke Girls*, *King of Queens*, *Last Man Standing*) and starring Todd Aronauer (producer – *Supernatural*), Lindsey Kraft (*Getting On*, *Grace and Frankie*), and Adam Shapiro (*Sense8*, *Cristela*, *1600 Penn*), Camille Chen (*Studio 60 on the Sunset Strip*), Nelson Franklin (*New Girl*, *Veep*, *Traffic Light*), Jolie Jenkins (*Body of Proof*)

Popclick

Created by Quinn Beswick, Josh Margolin, and Samantha Martin – Los Angeles, CA

In this bite-size series, three hopeful-but-hapless aspiring journalists struggle to keep their third-rate gossip site afloat by any means necessary.

The Small Time

Created by Jack Canfora and Andrew Rein – Los Angeles, CA

A web series about struggling literary agent Ben Bernstein as he dredges the bottom of the barrel trying to find an author who can be the next big thing.

Featuring Jill Eikenberry (*L.A. Law*), Michael Tucker (*L.A. Law*)

Special Forces

Created by Phil Bucci – Los Angeles, CA

A badass detective is forced to work with two lowly, bumbling, not-so-super-powered superhero cops to save the city from villains' sinister plots.

Starring Mircea Monroe (*Episodes*, *Hart of Dixie*), Tania Gunadi (*Enlisted*, the upcoming *Graves*), Mort Burke (*Drunk History*, *Enlisted*, *The Mindy Project*)

Textbook Adulthood

Created by Madeline Walter and Paul Welsh – Los Angeles

Two SAT tutors wonder if the transitional job they started in their 20's has turned into a sad career as they enter their 30's.

Created by and starring Paul Welsh (*Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*) and Madeline Walter (*CollegeHumor Originals*), and Guest Starring Lennon Parham (*Playing House*, *Lady Dynamite*)

Time Out with Yes Please Comedy

Created by Teresa Decher and Jason Nguyen – Los Angeles, CA

From regretfully bad hook-ups to a Wikipedia page dedicated to foot fetishes, this series of comedic vignettes follows the lives of comedy partners and best friends Teresa and Jason.

Tiny House

Created by Owen Williams – Los Angeles, CA

After not speaking to each other since their mom's death nine years before, three misfit siblings return home to squabble over their last remaining inheritance– the family home.

Triffany & Briffney

Created by Kady Ruth Ashcraft, Alise Morales, and Geoffrey Stevens – New York, NY

Triffany and Briffney are two hardworking assistants who, could they do anything, would do everything for their wretched bosses.

Unmarketable

Created by Megan Koester and Steven Feinartz – Los Angeles, CA

A misanthrope comedian proves to be her own worst enemy when it comes to finding success.

Co-created by Steven Feinartz (Director – *The Bitter Buddha*)

The Vampire Leland

Created by Ken Ferrigni, Tony Manna, and Tijuana Ricks – Brooklyn, NY

Leland, an overweight, balding 35-year old is accidentally turned into a vampire by a melancholy, two-hundred-year-old blood-sucker named Marius, who hates his undead life.

Co-created by Tijuana Ricks (the upcoming *Luke Cage*, *A Gifted Man*) and featuring Ato Essandoh (*Vinyl*, *Believe*, *Girls*)

The Worst Husband

Created by Steve Dildarian – Los Angeles, CA

Vance Johnson is a decent guy who is newly married and new to the suburbs. Confronted by judgmental neighbors, conservative in-laws, and nosy co-workers, his good deeds somehow get twisted and misunderstood, and he comes across looking like the worst guy ever.

Created by and starring Steve Dildarian (*The Life and Times of Tim*) and starring Janie Haddad Tompkins (*Comedy Bang! Bang!*, *Regular Show*), Ian Roberts (writer/creator – *The UCB Show*, writer – *Key and Peele*, actor – *Arrested Development*), Kate Flannery (*The Office*), Graham Wagner (producer – *Baskets*, *Portlandia*), John Levenstein (*Portlandia*, *Kroll Show*, Producer – *Silicon Valley*)

Written Off

Created by Antoine McKay and Margie Shabazz – Chicago, IL

The fashion section of *The Chicago Truth* is shutting down, rendering Keith and Liam jobless. These two best friends and cohorts have no choice but to reinvent themselves and put their journalistic talents to work.

Created by and starring Antoine McKay (*Empire*)

Yidlife Crisis

Created by Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman – Montreal, QC, Canada

Chaime and Leizer, best friends and debating adversaries, tackle life, love, and lactose intolerance in this foodie centric series done entirely in their grandparents' Yiddish.

Guest starring Mayim Bialik (*Blossom*, *The Big Bang Theory*)

DRAMA / DRAMEDY

According to My Mother

Created by Daniel K. Isaac, Cathy Y. Yan, and Devin Landin – Queens, NY

This modern take on the family series features a young, gay Korean-American living in New York and his disapproving, devout Christian mother who moves in with him...and changes everything.

Co-created by and starring Daniel K. Isaac (*Billions*)

Distance

Created by Alex Dobrenko – Los Angeles, CA

This romantic comedy for the millennial age tells the story of a long-distance relationship from two perspectives – “his” and “hers.”

Starring Ashley Spillers (*Vice Principals*)

Doomsday

Created by Sonja O'Hara – New York, NY

This episodic drama chronicles the daily lives and backstories of the members of an upstate New York cult, uncovering the gray area where youthful idealism evolves into deadly extremism.

The Failures

Created by Adam Parr – New York, NY

A group of strangers have two things in common: they are failing miserably at life, and they're part of a dark social experiment. Each episode takes a different journey as stories collide and intertwine, unknowingly driving towards a common endpoint. What if the key to success is a gun to the head?

Floppy D

Created by Logan Leikam and Chris Mast – Los Angeles, CA

When cyber-bachelor Dale Daniels realizes some rather 'personal' data has been stolen from his DateQuest account, he embarks on a journey to reclaim his identity in this hyper-realist future dramedy exploring relationships, privacy, and human connection in a technology-driven world.

Getting In

Created by Stian Hafstad and Robert Monk Davis – New York, NY

After losing his scholarship, Roger, a college student at one of the most prestigious universities in America, will go to any length to avoid being kicked out, including hacking the school's tuition system to clear his bill.

The Gigolo

Created by Eliza Schroeder, Lloyd Morgan, and Antonia Pollak – London, United Kingdom

The world's oldest profession and the world's deadliest profession combine in this torrid game of cat-and-mouse as a young gigolo becomes a secret agent to find his one and only love.

Featuring Jane Asher (*Death at a Funeral*, *Alfie*)

Guidance

Created by Josh Wolff – Chicago, IL

A Catholic high school psychologist with a secret and a drinking problem struggles to keep his professional and personal lives separate and intact.

Her Story

Created by Jen Richards and Laura Zak – Los Angeles, CA

This modern relationship drama follows Violet and Paige, two transgender women in Los Angeles, who have given up on love when chance encounters suddenly give them hope.

The Kama Sutra Club

Created by Daniel Klein – Orange, CA

A sexually-repressed professor researches every position of the Kama Sutra in an attempt to scrub away the memory of his ex-wife.

That's My DJ

Created by D.W. Waterson – Toronto, Ontario, Canada

From heartbeat to heartbreak, chasing dreams and chasing highs, it's an unapologetic look at music, cliques and artists all trying to find their place within the new order of rave.

Starring Kristian Bruun (*Orphan Black*), Emily Piggford (*Hemlock Grove*), Jade Hassouné (*Heartland*, *Shadowhunters: The Mortal Instruments*)

Truth Slash Fiction

Created by Tim Rosser, Daniel Schloss, and Charlie Sohne – New York, NY

Inspired by the real and burgeoning community of girls who write erotic gay fan fiction ("slash fiction") about boybands, *Truth Slash Fiction* follows 16-year-old Emma Jacobs as she attempts to survive the sometimes painful, sometimes hilarious indignities of adolescence, and finds community in a writers' group of likeminded outsiders.

Starring Matt Doyle (*Gossip Girl*), Cady Huffman (*Broadway – The Producers*, *The Will Rogers Follies*; *The Good Wife*), Sarah Mezzanotte (*Royal Pains*), Yainis Ynoa (*Power*)

The Union

Created by Jordan Riggs – Brooklyn, NY

After being assigned to photograph a gruesome murder scene on a New York rooftop, Leah uncovers evidence of a dangerous underground cult that controls the city. This sets her on a harrowing path to unearth the cult's secrets before they force her life to tumble out of control.

Produced by Damon Dash (Roc-A-Fella Records)

Urban Teach Now

Created by SJ Son and Ginny Leise – New York, NY

In this satirical dramedy, achievement-obsessed recent college grad Eunice reluctantly signs on to Urban Teach Now, a non-profit teaching program in New Orleans, as a means to boost her hireability and pad her resume. Six months in, Eunice is right where she started – ill-equipped with only her B.S. in Business and unflagging entitlement.

UNSCRIPTED

Click Bait

Created by Shawn Bowers and Colin Hogan – Chicago, IL

Comedians face off in a series of outrageous online assignments in this web-centric prank show.

Comedy Digs

Created by Shelly Gossman – Los Angeles, CA

In this twist on the home improvement genre, *SNL* writers-room alum Shelly Gossman helps her fellow comedians turn their grungy pads into homes suitable for grownups as they sort through comedic oddities and tackle tricky DIY projects.

Starring Shelly Gossman (*Saturday Night Live*) and Mike O'Brien (*Saturday Night Live*), Featuring Sam Richardson (*Veep*)

Heartstrings

Created by Daniel Saulnier, Dom Del Russo, and Jody Joseph Bongiovi – Tinton Falls, NJ

Jody Joseph Bongiovi isn't your average music instructor. Bongiovi's uncanny approach has turned her from professor to mentor, but that's just the beginning.

Hello Future

Created by Tessa Greenberg and Moujan Zolfaghari – New York, NY

In this unscripted-meets-sketch comedy, two young women use themselves as test subjects to explore what it means to be "of the times" in 2016 and beyond.

Co-created by and starring Moujan Zolfaghari (*Thingstarter*)

ANIMATION

Coli High

Created by Kevin Barker and Ben Miller – Brooklyn, NY

A trio of unpopular-but-lovable bacteria navigate a surreal take on the hilarious high school social pressures we all know and hate... inside a stomach.

Fired on Mars

Created by Nick Vokey and Nate Sherman – Los Angeles, CA

Jeff just got fired from his graphic design job. On Mars. And there's no way for him to get home.

Limited Space

Created by Tiffany So and Saba Saghafi – Los Angeles, CA

In the wake of an impending population-density crisis, every household on Earth must send one member to live on The Ark: a shuttle sent into space never to return.

Night Can

Created by Charlie Laud – Los Angeles, CA

A crime-fighting trashcan and a bachelor cop team up to save their city from the clutches of organized crime and rampant bureaucracy.

Preditors (of Williamsburg)

Created by Jakob Strunk – Brooklyn, NY

An animated comedy depicting the various misadventures of morally misguided "hipsters" who live and work at a production company in Brooklyn, NY.

Superior Living

Created by Steven Kahn – New York, NY

Duncan Bagley and Marty Fudge, a pair of New York ‘liberal elites’ (completely oblivious to their designation as such), interact with the rest of the world.

Starring Paul F. Tompkins (*BoJack Horseman*, *Comedy Bang! Bang!*) and Horatio Sanz (*Scorpion*, *Saturday Night Live*)

Tsunami Tuna

Created by Jim Wilkie and Daryl Wilcher – Atlanta, GA

While being pursued by a crazed Russian sea captain, Tsunami Tuna and RAD recruit a newly-released killer whale to stop mankind’s exploitation of the world’s oceans, only to discover the orca doesn’t care for life in the wild.