

Footlight Productions' "UNEXPECTED" Earns Honorable Mention at AGBO's Global No Sleep 'Til Film Fest

Footlight Co-Founder Vanessa Silva's Short Film Ranks Among Top 15 Worldwide

TEMECULA, CA - Footlight Productions is proud to announce that *Unexpected*, directed, cinematography, and edited by filmmaker and co-founder Vanessa Silva, has been awarded Honorable Mention at AGBO's Fifth Annual No Sleep 'Til Film Fest, placing the film among the Top 15 submissions worldwide in a competition that annually draws hundreds of international filmmakers.

Founded by Anthony and Joe Russo - the visionary directors behind Marvel's Avengers: Endgame, and producers of Everything Everywhere All At Once - AGBO's No Sleep 'Til Film Fest challenges creators to develop, shoot, edit and deliver an original three-minute short film in just 48 hours. This year's festival theme focused on "Perspective," inspiring filmmakers to craft bold narratives under intense creative pressure.

Footlight Productions' film, *Unexpected*, captivated the judges with its emotional depth, grounded performances, and dual-perspective exploration of womanhood, earning recognition from a jury that included Letitia Wright, Simu Liu, and the AGBO executive team.

About the Film — "Unexpected"

Through shifting perspectives, two friends confront the unexpected parallels of infertility and pregnancy.

Director's Statement — Vanessa Silva

"*Unexpected* was born from the desire to explore the often unspoken realities of infertility and pregnancy. These experiences—full of hope, heartbreak, resilience, and transformation—are rarely portrayed with the raw honesty they deserve. I wanted to tell this story through the eyes of two women whose perspectives parallel in unexpected ways, revealing how universal and yet deeply personal these struggles are.

"As a filmmaker, I am drawn to stories that hold a mirror to our most vulnerable moments and allow audiences to feel seen. With *Unexpected*, my goal was to create an intimate, emotional space where viewers could sit with both the beauty and the pain of these journeys.

"Visually, I leaned into a naturalistic, grounded style that allowed the performances to breathe and the emotional weight to take center stage. The film is a quiet, heartfelt reminder that even in our most isolating moments, we are not alone."

Team Spotlight — The Artists Behind "Unexpected"

In true Footlight fashion, *Unexpected* was created with a fiercely dedicated, all-hands-on-deck team of collaborators who brought passion, craft, and heart to every frame:

- Starring: Chelsea Gray and Alex Flores
- With: Kevin Elmore and Kayla Eehn
- Directed & Cinematography: Vanessa Silva
- Camera & Edited By: Vanessa Silva and Heather Hentila
- Written & Produced By: The Footlights
- Assistant Director: Dillan Blackwood
- Script Supervisors: Kayla Eehn and Chelsea Gray
- Sound: Matthew Bush and Kevin Elmore

This collective effort reflects Footlight Productions' mission: championing collaboration, elevating emerging talent, and telling intimate, impactful stories with unapologetic heart.

Acknowledgments

Silva extends her gratitude to the fierce collective at Footlight Productions, AGBO, The Russo Brothers, and the entire panel of judges for their dedication to uplifting filmmakers and fostering creative opportunities around the world.

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