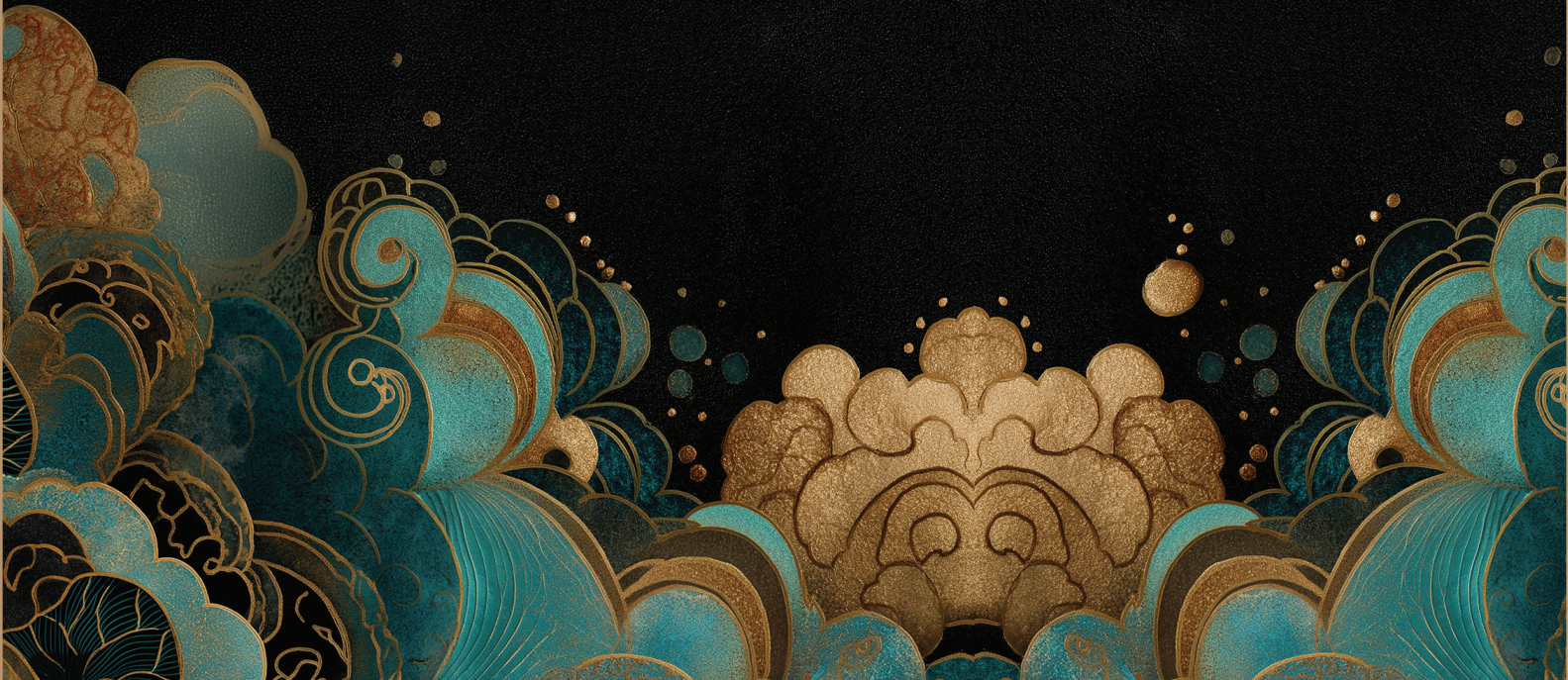




# IMPACT AWARDS *Gala*

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026  
BEVERLY HILTON HOTEL



# THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

## ACADEMY LEVEL



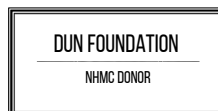
## PREMIERE LEVEL



## RED CARPET LEVEL



## SPOTLIGHT LEVEL



# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Good evening, and welcome to NHMC's Impact Awards Gala.

Tonight, we gather at a moment of real transformation in our industry. Hollywood is in flux, shifting itself in ways that are uncertain yet full of possibility. And in moments like this, we are called not to retreat, but to lean in. This is the time to take risks. To invest boldly in our communities. To uplift the talent and creatives who have always been here, those in front of the camera and those behind it, telling stories that reflect the truth of our lived experiences. Big change creates space for something entirely new, and it is up to us to shape what comes next.

At the same time, as we navigate an era defined by consolidation and conglomerate mergers, we must return to the basics, recognizing the power of local storytelling and the urgency of local journalism. That is why NHMC created the Defend the Press Coalition because a free and independent press is essential to a functioning democracy.

Now more than ever, we need voices rooted in community, committed to telling the truth free from corporate agendas or media bias, and focused on what our communities actually want and need. We must protect those spaces fiercely. And let's be clear: expanding voices and perspectives does not mean making room for hate, ignorance, or narratives rooted in harm. It means uplifting stories of truth and individual freedom, of community strength and of the lived experiences that deserve to be seen with dignity. We cannot allow hate to dictate what is amplified or whose voices are valued. True freedom is about choice. We must ensure people have access to a wide range of perspectives grounded in integrity. That requires resisting the narrowing of voices and continuing to fight for a landscape where many stories can exist side by side, without distortion or exclusion.

Tonight is a celebration of those who are doing exactly that. The individuals we honor are not just creating content, they are creating impact. They are showing up and insisting on being seen and heard on their own terms. They remind us that representation is not a trend, but a responsibility.

Above all, this Gala is about community. It is about coming together, standing together, and uplifting one another in meaningful ways. Real community is not always easy. In fact, it is rooted in inconvenience, in discomfort, and, most importantly, in the willingness to show up even when it would be simpler not to. That is what makes it a labor of love. And that is what makes nights like this so powerful. Thank you for being here, for believing in this work, and for continuing to build something greater together.

Yours in the movement,



Brenda Victoria Castillo

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The National Hispanic Media Coalition was founded in 1986, by President & CEO Emeritus Alex Nogales, Esther Renteria, and Armando Durón, as a response to the lack of Latino representation in local news markets serving sizeable Latino audiences. Over three decades of advocacy, NHMC has increased the representation of Latinos behind and in front of the camera through media advocacy within the entertainment and news industry and with in-depth legal analysis for public policy reforms that advance affordable, open and secure communications.

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HOST  
**CRIS  
ESTRADA**

Cris Estrada, is a stand-up comedian, actor, and writer. He is the co-creator and star of the critically acclaimed Hulu series *This Fool*. Cris is a first generation Mexican-American and was born and raised in Los Angeles. In 2019, Cris was a Comedy Central's UP NEXT Comedian and in 2018 he was voted as one of "LA's Comedians to Watch" by Time Out LA. Cris tours the country doing stand-up comedy. He is currently developing a workplace comedy at NBC. If you have any projects you want Cris to act or write for, he's already interested. He is very passionate about acting and writing, but he's even more passionate about keeping his SAG-AFTRA / WGA health insurance.



## HOST

# ISABELLA GOMEZ

Isabella Gomez will appear in Season 3 of Apple TV+'s acclaimed comedy series *Shrinking*, joining a cast that includes Jason Segel and Harrison Ford. The upcoming season also features guest stars Michael J. Fox, Jeff Daniels, and Sherry Cola.

Most recently, Gomez starred as Yoli in the world premiere of *One of the Good Ones* by Gloria Calderón Kellett at Pasadena Playhouse. The production made history as the first Latin play commissioned by the theater and became its fifth best-selling show in nearly a century. Featuring an all-Latino cast and receiving nightly standing ovations, the play was both a critical and cultural milestone.

On screen, Gomez recurred as 'Carmen' on ABC's *The Goldbergs* and appeared in *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. She is widely recognized for her breakout role as 'Elena' on Netflix's *One Day at a Time*, a performance that earned her an Imagen Award for Best Supporting TV Actress. Additional credits include starring in Netflix's *A Cinderella Story: A Christmas Wish* and an early recurring role on *Matador* for El Rey Network.

Fluent in Spanish, Gomez continues to bring dynamic, multidimensional characters to life across television, film, and theater.



# HONOREE

# THE

# STUDIO

In *The Studio*, Seth Rogen stars as Matt Remick, the newly appointed head of embattled Continental Studios. As movies struggle to stay alive and relevant, Matt and his core team of infighting executives battle their insecurities as they wrangle narcissistic artists and craven corporate overlords in the ever-elusive pursuit of making great films. With their power suits masking their never-ending sense of panic, every party, set visit, casting decision, marketing meeting and award show presents them with an opportunity for glittering success or career-ending catastrophe. As someone who eats, sleeps and breathes movies, it's the job Matt's been pursuing his whole life, and it may very well destroy him.



## HONOREE

# BELISSA ESCOBEDO

Belissa Escobedo stars opposite Reba McEntire on NBC's half hour series *Happy's Place*, which is currently shooting its second season. She played "Milagro" in DC Entertainment/Warner Brothers' *Blue Beetle*, which opened #1 at the box office. Escobedo also starred in Disney's *Hocus Pocus 2* in which she played one of the new young leads opposite Bette Midler and Sarah Jessica Parker in the sequel to the Halloween cult classic. Escobedo previously starred on the ABC one hour dramedy *The Baker And The Beauty*. Additional credits include Ryan Murphy's FX anthology series *American Horror Stories*, the Catherine Hardwicke-directed Quibi limited series *Don't Look Deeper*, American High's Hulu film *Sex Appeal* and American High's film *Sid Is Dead*. Escobedo got her big break with the 2018 ABC Discovers: LA Talent Showcase, which she auditioned for amongst thousands for a select group of twenty.



HONOREE

**BETH  
DE ARAÚJO**

Beth de Araújo is a Writer and Director whose sophomore feature, *Josephine* participated in the 2018 Sundance Directors Lab and went on to have the rare distinction of winning both the Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award at The Sundance Film Festival in 2026. *Josephine* has been acquired by Sumerian Pictures and will have a wide theatrical release in the fall. Previously, Beth was nominated for the 2022 Gotham Bingham Ray Breakthrough Director Award for her debut film, *Soft & Quiet*. *Soft & Quiet* premiered at SXSW in 2022, was acquired by Blumhouse, and distributed by eOne.



## HONOREES

# DANYA JIMENEZ & HANNAH MCMECHAN

Danya is a Mexican American writer who grew up in Orange County. She learned English by repeating everything Lizzie McGuire said. Hannah is from a small town right beneath Yosemite National Park where everyone has a country accent for some reason...even though it's NorCal. The two met as college freshmen and have been best friends/roommates/writing partners/co-workers/sisters/enemies/etc. ever since.

Named "Screenwriters to Watch" by Variety in 2025, the duo were just 24 when they co-wrote K-POP DEMON HUNTERS which exploded into the zeitgeist becoming Netflix's most-watched film of all time and topping global music charts with its soundtrack. The film went on to receive widespread recognition across animation, music, and film awards bodies, winning two Golden Globes, two Critics' Choice Awards, 6 Annie Awards (including Best Writing – Feature), a Grammy and two Oscars. The film was also named TIME's 2025 Breakthrough of the Year.

Up next, Jimenez and McMechan are set to write Tim Burton's reimagining of ATTACK OF THE 50 FOOT WOMAN, with Margot Robbie's LuckyChap Entertainment developing and producing. They are currently taking out their original series A REALLY BAD PERSON with Legendary Entertainment, as well as an original feature, a queer western. Previously, they developed a LORD FARQUAAD feature for DreamWorks Animation and a CHEECH & CHONG BIOPIC with Todd Lieberman's Hidden Pictures. In TV, they are writers and Co-Producers on BROTHERS, the upcoming Matthew McConaughey/Woody Harrelson show for Apple+ and Skydance and staff writers for the REN & STIMPY REBOOT for Comedy Central and Paramount+.



## HONOREE JAMES ORTIZ

James Ortiz is an award-winning actor, director, performer, and designer who continues to garner global recognition for his unique blend of theatricality, movement theatre, and puppetry across original and adapted works for stage and screen.

Currently, he stars as Rocky in *Project Hail Mary* – bringing the non-human character to life through voice performance and serving as its lead puppeteer on set alongside Ryan Gosling. Directed by Lord and Miller, the adaptation of the bestselling novel released by Amazon MGM Studios in March 2026 has grossed over \$400 million globally and counting. Within two weeks of release, the film set the record as the highest-grossing film for Amazon MGM Studios post-acquisition. This fall, Ortiz' puppetry design will be featured in the world-premiere opera adaptation of George Saunders' novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* at the Metropolitan Opera.

In 2022, he won the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Puppet Design for the dinosaurs he created for the Tony-nominated production of Lincoln Center's *The Skin of Our Teeth*. His acclaimed Off-Broadway creation *The Woodsman* earned him a 2016 OBIE Award for Outstanding Puppet Design, and his interpretation of Milky White in the 2022 Broadway revival of *Into the Woods* which became a fan favorite and viral sensation, is now on display at the Museum of Broadway. His additional acting credits include *El Gato Con Botas* (Tectonic Theater Project) and *On the Head of a Pin* (Strangemen & Co.).

Ortiz is a 2017 Eugene O'Neill Theater Center residency recipient, a 2015 and 2019 Jim Henson Foundation Grant awardee, and was highlighted in 2020 by *American Theatre* magazine among "Six Theatre Workers You Should Know."

# AWARD

NHMC proudly supports local artists by selecting original pieces that celebrate culture, creativity, and community. Rather than giving a traditional award, NHMC honors individuals with meaningful artwork that reflects powerful visual storytelling.



*ARTIST: ABBY ACEVES*

*TITLE: ADELITA*

*MEDIA: OIL AND EPOXY CLAY ON CANVAS*

*YEAR: 2024*

This piece explores the intersection of strength and vulnerability—how someone can be resilient while also feeling fragile. Many of our parents migrated from other countries and knew only how to work nonstop, even while struggling with health or emotional challenges. They passed down the mindset of “suck it up” and keep going: be strong, don’t complain. And yes, we are strong—but we also need care. We need moments where we can rest, be supported, and lay our heads on someone’s shoulder.

Photo by: Mercedes Zapata



## ARTIST ABBY ACEVES

I am a self-taught painter and interdisciplinary artist. I was born in Sonora, México, and earned a bachelor's degree on a full scholarship from the Superior Fashion Center Edith Martin in my hometown of Guadalajara.

I worked in the fashion industry for seven years before transitioning into fine arts. Eight years ago, I moved to Los Angeles to expand my artistic possibilities. My practice is deeply rooted in storytelling, inspired by my culture and heritage. The main focus of my art practice is to make work that resonates with people and make them feel seen and represented. I am particularly inspired by the intersection of fashion and fine arts, which fuels my fascination with texture and color. Oil paint is my primary medium, but I have recently begun experimenting with new materials, including epoxy clay, resins, and cold wax, to expand my expressive range and enhance the tactile experience of my work.

DJ

## SIZZLE FANTASTIC



Sizzle Fantastic is a DJ, Event Producer, and Community Organizer born in la Costa de Guerrero, Mexico, and raised in the beautiful barrio of Boyle Heights, California. Currently, she is the resident DJ and curator of Cumbiatón, a Nationwide party paying homage to the Afro-Latinx cultura and musica de barrios.

Sizzle Fantastic holds DJ residencies all throughout Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and New York.

You can find her on Instagram and Soundcloud to stay up to date with her shows.



## **Support NHMC! No amount is too small and every little bit helps.**

NHMC is a woman-led non-profit civil and human rights organization that was founded to eliminate hate, discrimination, and racism toward the Latino communities.

We educate and increase Latinx visibility from our policy work in Washington, D.C., to our media advocacy work in Hollywood, where we connect, collaborate, and create with Latinx talent within the entertainment industry.

We lead the work to eliminate online hate and disinformation across media platforms. We advocate for the Affordable Connectivity Program, Lifeline Program, Net Neutrality protections, and closing the digital divide for Latino and other marginalized communities. NHMC works in partnership with other social justice organizations to safeguard democracy in the United States of America.



The National Hispanic Media Coalition is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, and your donation is tax-deductible within the guidelines of U.S. law.