

# How We Find and Build Talent

# The Talent.

Our catalog is only as good as the people who make it. This document describes how we identify, evaluate, and build long-term relationships with directors, writers, and actors — the working philosophy that turns a production company into a home for filmmakers.

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Model

**Author-First**

Priority

**Debut & Second Film**

Method

**Personal**

Horizon

**Multi-Project**

Territory

**Global**

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# 01

# The Philosophy.

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# How We Think About Talent

## We do not hire filmmakers. We build careers — and a filmmaker's second film matters more than their first.

Most production companies evaluate talent the way studios evaluate IP: as a transaction. **We reject this model.** A filmmaker is not a vendor for a single project — they are a long-term collaborator whose voice we will help develop over a decade or more.

The question we ask is never "is this project good?" It is "**do we want to be in business with this person for the next ten years?**" If the answer is no, the project does not happen — even if the script is brilliant.

This changes how we find people. We do not wait for finished scripts to arrive in our inbox. We watch shorts, we read early drafts, we meet people whose first feature we admire, we notice which cinematographers and editors keep reappearing on films we love.

The talent we want is almost never actively pitching us. **We find them.** And we build the kind of relationship where, when they are ready to make their next film, we are the first call.

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The right filmmaker in the wrong moment is still the right filmmaker. We wait. **The wrong filmmaker with a great script is still the wrong filmmaker.** We pass — no matter how good the script is.

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# The Profiles.

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We work with three kinds of filmmakers. **Each has a different trajectory with us, a different type of support, and a different kind of project.** Understanding which profile a filmmaker fits is the first step in designing the relationship.

## # 01 — The Emerging Voice

### The first-time feature director.

A filmmaker with one or two strong shorts, possibly a feature that never got finished or found distribution. **They have the sensibility but not yet the proof.** This is our most common profile and our most important investment.

We offer them the resources to make their debut correctly — script development, cast access, technical support — without forcing commercial compromises. In exchange, we build a first-look relationship for their second film.

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#### # What we look for

- A short film that could not have been made by anyone else
- A specific obsession, not a generic sensibility
- Demonstrated taste in actors, music, imagery
- Evidence they finish what they start

## # 02 — The Restless Craftsman

### The mid-career filmmaker.

A director who has made two, three, or four features — maybe one celebrated, maybe all quietly respected — but who **has not yet found the right home.** They are between studios and have outgrown pure indie financing.

We offer them a partner who treats them as an author, not a hired director. We bring institutional support without the studio compromises. This is where the company's reputation is built: on filmmakers who chose us when they could have gone anywhere.

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#### # What we look for

- A body of work with a discernible through-line
- Frustration with previous collaborators, not with the craft
- An upcoming project that is more personal than their last
- Willingness to be challenged on the script

### # 03 — The Writer Who Should Direct

## The screenwriter making the leap.

A writer with a proven track record — produced credits, strong samples — who has been asked to write other people's films for years and is ready to direct. **They understand structure in a way pure visual directors often do not.**

We help them transition by pairing them with the right cinematographer, editor, and production designer. The risk is lower than a first-time director because the foundation — the script — is already strong.

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#### # What we look for

- A produced screenplay we wish we had made
- A script they wrote that nobody else should direct
- Openness to learning what they do not know yet
- Clear vision for scenes, not just pages

### # 04 — The Actor Who Is Secretly a Director

## The performer transitioning behind the camera.

An actor with fifteen or twenty years of work who has been paying attention on set. **They have the most underrated preparation of any director type** — they understand performance from the inside, they have seen every kind of set mistake, and they have the cast relationships to attract serious talent.

The risk is different: they may over-rely on performance and underweight visual storytelling. We pair them with strong DPs and let them lean on what they already know.

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#### # What we look for

- A short or debut that shows visual thinking beyond coverage
- Humility about what they do not yet know
- A specific story only they can tell
- The cast is not just their friends phoning in favors

### # 03

## Where We Look.

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**The best filmmakers are not submitting to us. They are doing the work somewhere we have to notice. Our job is to be present at the places where voices emerge — before they have agents, before they are packaged, before anyone else is paying attention.**

<p># Festivals</p> <p><b>Short film sections at major festivals.</b></p> <p>Cannes Critics' Week, Sundance Shorts, Locarno Pardi di Domani, TIFF Shorts, Morelia, Guadalajara.</p> <p><b>Feature programming is for acquisitions. Shorts programming is for talent.</b> Every major filmmaker was in a shorts section somewhere.</p>	<p># Labs &amp; Residencies</p> <p><b>Writing and development labs.</b></p> <p>Sundance Labs, Cannes Cinéfondation Residency, Berlinale Talents, TorinoFilmLab, IMCINE's Ópera Prima.</p> <p>The filmmakers in these programs have been vetted three times over — and their projects are still <b>a year or two away from production</b>, which is exactly when we should meet.</p>	<p># Film Schools</p> <p><b>Thesis films at top programs.</b></p> <p>AFI, NYU, UCLA, CalArts, CCC (Mexico City), La Fémis, NFTS, CRIM.</p> <p>Thesis films are <b>a filmmaker's most honest calling card</b>. They have not yet learned to make what they think the market wants. The voice is at its most specific.</p>
<p># Adjacent Industries</p> <p><b>Commercial and music video directors.</b></p> <p>The best commercial directors have visual vocabulary and crew leadership that first-time feature directors take years to develop.</p> <p>The risk is they may not know how to sustain a 90-minute narrative. The reward — <b>when it works</b> — is a filmmaker with extraordinary craft who brings something fresh to long-form.</p>	<p># Literature</p> <p><b>Novelists, journalists, playwrights.</b></p> <p>Not to option their work — but to meet them as potential screenwriters.</p> <p>A novelist with a specific world-view and a demonstrated ability to build character may be <b>a better co-writer for a director than a career screenwriter who knows all the beats</b>.</p>	<p># Crew</p> <p><b>Cinematographers, editors, production designers.</b></p> <p>We track the crew on films we admire. A DP who has shot three films we love is <b>a signal about the directors they have worked with</b> — and a resource we can offer to our directors.</p> <p>We build relationships with key crew so that when we package a project, we have real options, not just agency lists.</p>
<p># Recommendations</p> <p><b>Filmmakers we already work with.</b></p> <p>The single most reliable source of new talent. A director we trust telling us about another director they trust is worth ten blind submissions.</p> <p>We ask every filmmaker we sign: <b>"Who should we be talking to that we are not?"</b></p>	<p># Actors &amp; Casting</p> <p><b>Casting directors and agents at the margins.</b></p> <p>Mid-tier casting directors see thousands of performances a year and develop strong opinions about who is ready for a bigger role.</p> <p>Boutique agents — not the majors — often represent talent that has not yet been packaged, which means <b>we can still build the project around the actor</b>.</p>	<p># Regional Cinema</p> <p><b>National scenes outside the global spotlight.</b></p> <p>Strong filmmakers emerge every year in countries whose output rarely reaches festival distribution. Colombia, Chile, Romania, South Korea, Iran, Taiwan.</p> <p>A filmmaker with two features celebrated only in their country is often <b>ready for international work and underpriced</b>.</p>

# The Process.

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From first encounter to first signed deal. **This is how we move from "we like their work" to "we are making a film together."** Each step is designed to build trust and test fit — in both directions.

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## 01

### The notice.

A short film, a feature debut, a script sample, a name that keeps coming up. **We track the filmmaker quietly for six to twelve months** before making contact — watching what they do next, who they work with, whether the voice is consistent or was a one-time accident.

OUTCOME

Internal dossier. No contact yet.

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## 02

### The meeting.

A conversation with no agenda. We want to hear them talk about what they love, what they hate, what they are reading, what made them a filmmaker. **No pitches, no decks, no specific project.** We are testing for worldview, not product.

OUTCOME

Clarity on whether there is real fit.

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## 03

### The small collaboration.

Before any feature deal, we find a way to work together on something smaller — a treatment read, a casting conversation, a script note. **This is where we learn how they respond to feedback**, how they think under pressure, whether the collaboration feels productive or extractive.

OUTCOME

**A working relationship, not a contract.**

## 04

### The project emerges.

We do not rush to a project. When the filmmaker is ready — and when there is a specific script or idea that passes our voice filter — **we begin development together**. If the first idea is not right, we do not force it. We wait for the second or third.

OUTCOME

**Development deal. Not yet production.**

## 05

### The greenlight.

Only when the script, the package, and the moment are all right. **We would rather delay a film by a year than make it with the wrong DP or the wrong lead**. A rushed greenlight is the first sign of a compromised film.

OUTCOME

**Production commitment.**

# 06

## The aftermath.

The relationship does not end when the film comes out. **We debrief honestly — what worked, what did not, what we would do differently.** The goal is that the second film with us is measurably better than the first.

OUTCOME

**First-look deal for next project.**

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# The Relationship.

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What we offer filmmakers. What we expect in return. **A clear deal on both sides.** The worst relationships in this industry are the ones where expectations were never named. These are ours.

## # What We Offer

**Final cut.** The director has it. Always. No exceptions for commercial pressure.

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**Creative partnership, not oversight.** We give notes because we care about the film, not because we need to justify our role.

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**Long-term commitment.** We sign on for careers, not projects. A filmmaker who works with us once should expect us to be there for their next.

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**Institutional muscle without the bureaucracy.** Access to cast, crew, financing, festivals — without the studio's fifteen-layer approval process.

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**Honesty.** We will tell a filmmaker when we think something is not working. We will also tell them when something is better than they realize.

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**Protection.** If the film underperforms, we do not disown it. If the filmmaker gets attacked by critics, we defend them publicly.

## # What We Expect

**A voice we can identify.** Not a generic filmmaker waiting for the right script. A specific sensibility we can build a career around.

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**Discipline on budget.** Sub-\$5M is our ceiling. A filmmaker who wants us to break it for them is not a Nemea filmmaker.

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**Openness to collaboration.** A director who cannot take a note, or refuses to consider a better idea, is a director whose career we cannot build.

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**A second project.** We invest heavily in first films because we expect a second. A filmmaker who sees us as a one-time resource is not for us.

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**Exclusivity where it matters.** We expect first-look during the term of our deal. We do not prevent outside work — we just want to be the first call.

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**Show up.** Festivals, press, marketing. A filmmaker who disappears after the wrap costs us as much as a bad final cut.

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# The Red Flags.

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Patterns we have learned to recognize — **not as dealbreakers, but as signals worth paying attention to.** Most of these are fixable with the right conversation. Some require more time. A few tell us the relationship will never work. Context matters more than the list.

<p><b>01</b>    <b>The filmmaker who cannot name specific influences.</b></p> <p>Not a canon. Not a top-ten list. <b>Three films that actually shaped how they think about cinema.</b> A filmmaker who answers this question vaguely — or who cites only the most obvious prestige titles — has not yet developed the specific taste that makes voice possible.</p>	<p><b>02</b>    <b>The project that changes every time you hear it pitched.</b></p> <p>Early development requires evolution — but there is a difference between refining an idea and not knowing what the idea is. <b>A director who describes the film differently every conversation is still searching.</b> That is fine, but we should know we are funding a search, not a film.</p>
<p><b>03</b>    <b>The director who cannot take a note.</b></p> <p>We test this early — small notes on the treatment, the lookbook, the character work. A filmmaker who gets defensive at ordinary creative feedback <b>will not survive the compromises production requires.</b> Every real filmmaker has to hear things they do not want to hear. We need to know they can.</p>	<p><b>04</b>    <b>The director who disappears between conversations.</b></p> <p>Weeks of silence, then a flurry of material, then silence again. <b>Pre-production discipline predicts production discipline.</b> If a filmmaker cannot maintain momentum on emails and drafts, the shoot itself will suffer. This is almost always a worse sign than it first appears.</p>
<p><b>05</b>    <b>The budget that keeps growing.</b></p> <p>Every film creeps a little during development — that is normal. But a project that was \$3M in the first conversation and is now \$6M "because of the vision" is a project where <b>someone does not understand the model they are being funded under.</b> Our ceiling is our ceiling.</p>	<p><b>06</b>    <b>The pitch that leads with packaging, not story.</b></p> <p>"We have [name] interested" is fine as the third sentence. When it is the first sentence, <b>the filmmaker is using attachments to compensate for something</b> — usually a script that is not ready or a vision that is not clear. Great work attracts packaging; packaging does not create great work.</p>

## 07 The lookbook that does not look like the film.

A reference deck is a statement of intent. When the images feel borrowed from a visual mood that has nothing to do with the script, **the director is either confused about the film or trying to elevate something modest by association.** The reference should match the reality.

## 08 The filmmaker who blames their last film's failure on everyone else.

Producers, studios, distributors, the market. **A director with zero responsibility for a film that did not work is a director who cannot learn.** We are not asking for false humility — we are asking for the honest post-mortem that makes the next film better.

## 09 The demands that exceed the moment.

First-time feature directors asking for final cut, approval over marketing, and points structures that only make sense for established auteurs. **We give final cut as a principle — but we need to know we are partnering with someone whose sense of their own position is accurate.** Unearned demands rarely get smaller over time.

## 10 The team that never changes.

Sometimes a director's loyalty to a DP, editor, or producer is a sign of deep collaboration. Sometimes it is a sign that the filmmaker is **afraid to work with anyone who might push back.** We are wary of a director who cannot imagine working with someone we suggest — or who has never tried.

# The best production companies are not discovered by filmmakers — they are chosen.

The filmmakers we want to work with have options. The script that arrives at our door has also arrived at ten other companies. **We do not win because we offer more money.** We win because we offer something scarcer: **a home.**

A home is not a benefit. It is a practice. It is answering emails within twenty-four hours. It is showing up at screenings of films we did not produce. It is remembering a filmmaker's partner's name. It is being honest when the script is not working. It is being loud in public when the critics are wrong.

Talent is not a resource to be acquired. **It is a relationship to be earned — and re-earned, every year, with every film.**

The measure of our success is not how many filmmakers sign with us. It is how many **sign again.** After one film. After three films. After ten years, when they could work with anyone in the industry, and they still choose us.

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**We are not building a slate. We are building a family of filmmakers whose work, taken together, will define what this company stands for.**