



Rachel Watanabe-Batton Executive Producer

Rachel Watanabe-Batton is an independent film and tv producer and founder of Contradiction and Struggle, best known for producing inclusive storytelling that reframes history and culture, and connects cinema, causes and capital.

Most recently, she produced a film installation directed by artist Jenn Nkiru for The Metropolitan Museum of Art's new Afrofuturist Period Room, which opens November 5, 2021; and EPIX docu-series "By Whatever Means Necessary" received the 2021 NAACP Award for Outstanding Directing in a Documentary. Watanabe-Batton was Consulting Producer on the series for director/EP Keith McQuirter. In addition to working toward the upcoming 2022 release of "Sneakerella" with Disney Plus, she is Executive Producing the hybrid documentary "Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl" with legendary writer-director Julie Dash ("Daughters of the Dust") based on the cookbook [Vibration Cooking, or the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl](#) by Vertamae Smart Grosvenor, a James Beard award-winning chef and pioneer of modern-day food writing. The doc has received generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Field of Vision, Black Public Media, National Endowment for the Arts, The College of Charleston and fiscal sponsor Women Make Movies. Dash and Watanabe-Batton are developing multiple scripted series together.

Watanabe-Batton's producing credits include the reality series "I Pity the Fool" with Mr. T (TV Land & Lionsgate), the documentary "Cutting Edge" (Cinemax) and doc series "Insider Training" (Discovery). She has produced narrative films with numerous auteur directors including "Ripe" (Mo Ogradnik), "Book of Love" (Jeff Byrd), "The Killers" (Tanya Hamilton) and "Bajo del Perro" (Polish Brothers). Her directing-producing credits include documentary short "Crisis in the Club" for EP Tonya Lewis-Lee and The Office of Minority Health. Her first film "Once You're In" aired on WGBH while she was still an undergraduate at Harvard-Radcliffe College, which she co-directed and produced with award-winning photographer Lauren Greenfield.

Watanabe-Batton's passion for historical and heady projects is balanced by a lifelong love of collaborating with musical artists since her days at the High School of Music & Art and homeroom class with future hip-hop innovators Slick Rick and Dana Dane. After getting her start in creative development at Warner Bros in Burbank with producers Paula Weinstein and Mark Rosenberg at Spring Creek Productions and assisting Australian director Peter Weir on the film "Fearless," she worked at the groundbreaking Propaganda Films on award-winner commercials, music videos and classic shows such as "Thunderbirds." During the heyday of hip hop, Watanabe-Batton co-founded the New York music video production company Department of Film with director/EP Nick Quested at Goldcrest Post in the late 1990s. She has produced classic videos for music icons including Nas, Diddy, Usher, WuTang, Lil Jon, Fat Joe, Trick Daddy, DMX and many other artists. Watanabe-Batton has also directed top ten videos in the U.S. and Africa, and helmed productions throughout the world.

She currently serves as Chair of the Board of the nation's largest media access center [Manhattan Neighborhood Network](#), and on the boards of New York Women in Film & Television (NYWIFT), and [Women Independent Producers](#). Rachel is committed to creating quality storytelling and cultivating gender, race and class equity. She was honored by NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment and Mayor DeBlasio with a MADE IN NY Award



for her leadership with the Producers Guild of America East (PGA) as Vice Chair, PGA Diversity Chair (2008-2018) and co-founder of PGA Women's Impact Network.