

LOOKING FOR LEIA

A DOCU-SERIES ABOUT WOMEN AND NON-BINARY FANS
WHO FOUND IDENTITY, CONNECTION, AND PURPOSE IN
THEIR LOVE OF THE GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY.



Official Site: www.lookingforleia.com

Publicity Materials: www.lookingforleia.com/press

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Produced & Directed by: Annalise Ophelian

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Twi'lek cosplayers at Star Wars Celebration Orlando, from Looking for Leia ©2017 Floating Ophelia Productions LLC

LOG LINE: A docu-series about women and non-binary fans who found identity, connection, and purpose in their love of the galaxy far, far away.

SHORT SYNOPSIS: LOOKING FOR LEIA is a docu-series that explores the culture of *Star Wars* fandom from the unique perspective of women, and also non-binary fans, who have been a substantial presence in the global phenomenon of *Star Wars* fandom since its debut in 1977, but have gone largely unrecognized until recently.

LOOKING FOR LEIA features the stories of intergenerational and culturally diverse fans who discuss their entry point into the *Star Wars* universe, and the passion and creativity with which they demonstrate their fandom. The series explores expressions of fandom: The stories we tell, what we build, what we preserve, where we see ourselves, how we Carry on, and the ways fandom transforms what we love into something new. The series reaches far beyond the legacy of Leia to examine how stories of women's fandom speak to experiences of gender resilience and resistance.

LOOKING FOR LEIA is a joyous gender justice project that shifts the traditional narrative of "geek culture," and highlights and humanizes stories and voices rarely centered in a series format. Sit back, because we're about to fem-splain *Star Wars* fandom.

LOOKING FOR LEIA is currently has been featured in Good Morning America, BBC Newsnight, The Verge, Nerdist, The Mary Sue, CNET, SyFy Wire, io9, and The Advocate. **Full media coverage available at www.lookingforleia.com/press**

EPISODES:

IT'S A WHOLE GALAXY

Since its debut in 1977, Star Wars has revolutionized the way we watch movies, interact with our heroes, and express our fandom. From the feature films to animation, books, games, comics, and more, there's an entry point for every generation. But it's what fans do with their love of the galaxy far, far away that's truly special. Unique, heartwarming, and funny, women and non-binary fans share how they first fell in love with the saga.

THE STORIES WE TELL

Before Twitter and Tumblr, chat rooms and Listservs, early fandom was written and recorded in fanzines. From a few sheets of paper to thick volumes, women wrote and edited hundreds of Star Wars fanzines in the period between 1977 and the early 1990s. These are our fan foremothers: The earliest communities built around connection and creativity, fueled by their love of story. Fan writer, artist, and publisher Maggie Nowakowska takes us on a tour of her extensive print fanzine collection, and describes how fandom helped shape 40 years of community.

MORE THAN THE BASEMENT

Many women and non-binary fans share the experience of having their fandom questioned and subjected to testing, with acquisition of trivia and collectibles set as a benchmark for "real" fandom. But our fandom often shows up in more creative, generative forms. Women discuss how their love of Star Wars goes beyond the screen and into their daily lives through fashion, art, jewelry, and crafts.

WHAT WE BUILD

Star Wars fans are among some of the most passionate builders and makers. Meet Naila, Psy, and Christina: Three women with no previous building experience who immersed themselves in 3D printing and coding to build screen accurate, fully operational droids. From free-rolling BB-8s to custom astromechs, women droid builders talk about the sense of accomplishment and self-confidence that comes from building favorite their favorite mechanical characters.

WHAT WE PRESERVE

In 2013, Star Wars A New Hope became the first major motion picture to be translated into Diné, as a Navajo language preservation effort. Voice actors Clarissa Yazzie (Princess Leia) and Geri Hongeva (C3PO) join translator Jennifer Wheeler to describe the process and impact of the project. Star Wars has been translated into 50 languages, but this translation ensures that the Navajo language will always be preserved in the galaxy far, far away.

WHEN WE SEE OURSELVES

What happens when under-represented fans see ourselves on screen? It's a relief of audience labor for marginalized fans, an inspiration, but also validation and essential permission to exist in the fantasy worlds we love. Fans talk about the impact of seeing themselves in the galaxy far, far away, and the ways they create that representation for themselves.

HOW WE CARRIE ON

From her on-screen creation of one of film's most iconic heroines to her off-screen work as an author and mental health advocate, Carrie Fisher made an indelible impact on generations of fans. Oaxaca-based non-profit development director Bárbara Lazcano shares how her childhood heroine became a role model of strength and resilience during a difficult time.

CREATOR'S STATEMENT:

Two years ago I set out with my camera to talk to fangirls. While I was inspired by my love of so many geeky things, *Star Wars* was my first fandom, and it's the one I've come back to throughout my life. It also seemed like a good assemblage point, as the most recognizable media franchise in the world, spanning over 40 years and every conceivable format. Bonus points that I'd get to hear about and talk about something that brought me a lot of joy for the years it took to complete the project.

The thing about documentary is you don't know what it's about until you're done. You can go in with an idea of what the story is, but you'll probably be wrong and it's best to hold your expectations lightly. You lean in. You listen. You ask follow-up questions. You consolidate what you've been told the best that you can, you go back to the people who were gracious enough to tell you their story, show them what you've done, and ask: "Did I get this right?"

Looking for Leia began as an inquiry into the experiences of women in *Star Wars* fandom, an exercise in shifting the traditionally cis male narrative of geekdom to tell the story from another set of perspectives. Over the course of two years, after speaking with over 100 women as well as non-binary fans, here's some of what I learned.

Fandom contains multitudes.

The most visible aspects of fandom — the social media discourse, the click bait headlines about conflict and obsession, the toxicity, the people who spend small fortunes on cons and costumes and collectibles — are only one facet of what constitutes fandom. I'd argue they're a small facet at that.

What we don't see nearly as often are the stories that take more than 280 characters to tell. Stories that don't compress into a headline, that aren't about *the first, the last, the best, the only*, that aren't about litmus tests or proving grounds. What we don't see are the ways fandom is a type of alchemy, in which a base material is transformed through inexplicable magic into something precious and entirely new.

These are the stories in *Looking for Leia*. We're not saturating a topic or explaining a phenomenon. How could we, when there are as many expressions of fandom, as many stories to tell, as there are fans in the world? We're telling a handful of stories about the ways fandom is an active state of creation, a love of a story that extends beyond beyond the object of affection, transforming it into something original, imbued with the unique passion of its creator.

There's something amazing that happens when you ask someone why they love a thing, and then lean in and really listen. Loving a thing is an act of connection, but also an act of seeking, of *looking*. For ourselves, for each other. We can't love a story without also looking for ourselves in that story, imagining ourselves into greater worlds. And when we do that, we create something new.

I've loved hearing these stories as they were told to me, I hope I've done them justice re-telling them to you. For each person who appears on screen, there are tens of thousands of fans out there in the world finding identity, connection, and meaning in their love of these stories. I hope watching *Looking for Leia* makes us all want to lean in, and listen to each other more.

Annalise Ophelian (producer/director) is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, psychotherapist, and media consultant whose work includes *Diagnosing Difference* (2009) and *MAJOR!* (2015). A lifelong *Star Wars* fan, her work focuses on centering marginalized voices and highlighting stories of gender and racial justice. She's queer identified and lives in San Francisco with her partner of 13 years and their three Chihuahuas. She doesn't often cosplay, but when she does, it's as Han Solo.



PRODUCTION STILLS available at www.lookingforleia.com/press:

