



LOOKING FOR LEIA

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Hashtags: #LookingForLeia, #WomenBuiltThisRebellion #GirlsRunTheGalaxy

U.S. Release Date: TBA 2018

Series length: Limited, 6 episodes, 21:30 – 24:00 mins each

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: LOOKING FOR LEIA is an six episode limited series that offers an intersectional cultural overview of women in *Star Wars* fandom and science fiction/fantasy genre.

SHORT SYNOPSIS: LOOKING FOR LEIA is a six episode limited series that explores the culture of *Star Wars* fandom from the unique perspective of fangirls: The girls and women 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 female 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: From droid builders, cosplayers, Saber Guilds and convention goers, to women using *Star Wars* in the classroom, women in STEM, fan fictionalists, collectors, and multi-generational fan families. The cultural implications of women in science fiction and fantasy genre and women's media representation in these genres is discussed by cinephiles, psychologists, scholars, artists, and authors. 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 traditionally male-dominated 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 in post-production and has been featured in The Verge, Nerdist, The Mary Sue, Good Morning America, BBC Newsnight, CNET, SyFy Wire, io9, Screen Rant, The Advocate, Comic Book Resources. **Full media coverage available at www.lookingforleia.com/press**

EPISODE LIST: As we're currently in post-production, this outline will vary slightly from the finished series.

Ep1: A Long Time Ago....

Fan foremothers and how we got here; locating *Star Wars* within science fiction and fantasy (SFF) genre; 40 years of lining up for *Star Wars* movie premieres; early *Star Wars* fanzine archivist Maggie Nowakowska; class of '77 fans share their stories. How women are perceived in SFF fandom and the “fake fan girl” test.

Ep2: Playing Dress Up

From the costuming regulations and charitable work of the official costuming organizations (the 501st Legion, Rebel Legion, Mandalorian Mercs and Saber Guild) to DIYers and YouTube tutorials. Cosplay anthropology; race bending and crossing gender in cosplay; the psychology of cosplay and identity.

Ep3: Fly Me to the Moon

Droid building and the women of the Stardust Builders Initiative; astronauts and women inspired into space careers; a *Star Wars*-themed Air Force retirement ceremony; women in *Star Wars* gaming culture; how *Star Wars* influenced women in STEM.

Ep4: Representation Matters

How representation on & behind the camera impacts women in the real world; discussion of classic film tropes for female characters in SFF; the utility of sci fi/fantasy genre for marginalized communities folks who experience multiple sites of oppression; a Bronx-based photographer creates a Plus Size Fangirls of Color portrait project; how shipping creates visibility for LGBTQ and ACE fans.

Ep5: Thank the Maker

Women creators in fandom. Fashion, crafting, cooking, and dolls are discussed as “feminized” and devalued expressions of fandom that are received differently than “masculine” expressions (armor, gaming, action figures). Women-run podcasts; a writer shares her Thrawn-inspired romance novel; a Japanese artist renders detailed character portraits in papercut; best selling authors on how *Star Wars* influenced their story telling.

Ep6: Women Built this Rebellion

Star Wars in political organizing and “geektivism”; Princess Leia as visual protest in the Trump Era; Carrie Fisher’s legacy of mental health advocacy and fan response to her passing; women using geekdom as a site of resistance and resilience; women’s experiences of trolling, doxxing, and harassment; how changing gender norms and SFF representation impact girls’ fandom expressions and how *Star Wars* fandom inspires their life paths.

EPISODE NOTES: Women tell the story on and off screen. We’re bringing in writers who’ve been published in related fields for each episode. Voice over narration will be provided by a diverse group of women with media recognition within the Sci Fi and Fantasy genre. Illustrators and animators will create dynamic, interpretive images to accompany participants’ stories of *Star Wars* fandom, and parallel the narrative of women taking these stories and imbuing them with their own personal significance and meaning.

FILMMAKER BIO:

Annalise Ophelian (producer/director) is an award-winning filmmaker, psychotherapist, and media consultant whose work includes *Diagnosing Difference* (2009) and *MAJOR!* (2015), which received 20 festival awards for Best Documentary. Dr. Ophelian's work focuses on centering marginalized voices and highlighting stories of gender and racial justice. She's also queer identified and lives in San Francisco with her partner of 11 years and their three Chihuahuas. She doesn't often cosplay, but when she does, it's as Han Solo.



Filmmaker Annalise Ophelian, age 5 in 1978 as Princess Leia. ©2018 Floating Ophelia Productions LLC

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



FILMMAKER'S STATEMENT:

Since the premiere of *Star Wars* in 1977, geek culture has moved from the margin to the mainstream. Science fiction and fantasy films, including speculative fiction and super hero films, have been in the box office top ten for the past 40 years. Avid readers of science fiction and fantasy novels and comic books, cosplayers and con-goers, have all seen their passions move from small gatherings to hugely popular global multi-media events. And women have been there from the very start.

Yet fandom as a social phenomenon has long been stereotyped as the domain of men, exclusively. Stereotypes about obsessed fanboys and lonely comic book guys dominate the cultural discussion of geek culture, and women's significant contributions both to fandom and the genre that inspires it have been entirely lacking.

I saw *Star Wars* in the theater in 1977 when I was four years old, and went back ten times in the summer of 1978. I was Princess Leia for Halloween that year, wearing a dress and cape my mother made for me from our curtains. I became a filmmaker in large part because of the magic I felt watching *Star Wars*. I became a documentarian because I could not find my own stories or the stories of those I loved accurately portrayed on screen. The digital filmmaking technology pioneered by franchises like *Star Wars* and filmmakers like George Lucas created access to production methods that would have been inaccessible to me in the 1970s, and it's not lost on me that I'm able to use these tools to document under-told stories. It's also not lost on me that until this point, the story of fandom, like the story of independent filmmaking, has been told almost entirely by and for white, cisgender, straight men.

I conceptualized and outlined LOOKING FOR LEIA in 2015 before Carrie Fisher's passing. I traveled the country filming interviews with women about their fandom for a year before the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements brought women's marginalization, media representation, and experiences of harassment sharply into focus and into the public discourse. What started as a feature length documentary film has now been expanded to a six episode limited series that explores the creativity, passion, and diverse humanity of girls and women in *Star Wars* fandom. In doing so, the project takes geek identity and fandom seriously and treats its subjects with respect, something previous documentaries on this subject have rarely accomplished. I'm bringing an intersectional lens to every aspect of this project, ensuring that we don't silently normalize "women" to mean white, cisgender, straight, able bodied, Christian women between 18 and 35 born in the United States and preface all other women with identity qualifiers. And by telling the story of fandom from the diverse perspectives of women of all backgrounds and experiences, I'm bringing a new lens to how we discuss the audience that made *Star Wars* the most successful transmedia mythic tale of all time.

May the Force be with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alison Jackson".