

JessicaGreen.mp3

[00:00:02] Shout out to eyes on the prize. That was something for me where this was my actual father, but I was a teenager at the time when that series and I mean, that was very foundational. And that kind of gets into my thinking about the power of story, the power of amplification, the power of putting a spotlight on something, the power of seeing what is unseen.

Linda [00:00:28] Hi, everybody, it's Linda. Welcome to a new episode of Our Voices Matter podcast.

Linda [00:00:34] If you're anything like I am during this crazy time of the pandemic, you're spending a lot of time watching movies, listening to music, consuming all kinds of art. Right. So art has such an important place in our lives. And my guest today is someone who helps to bring that art to us. And I'm really excited to talk with her. Her name is Jessica Green. She is the artistic director of the Houston Cinema Arts Festival. She also has a really interesting back story on a personal level that is connected to the civil rights movement. So we have a really interesting, wide ranging conversation that connects the dots between where we are right now as a society, as humans, all of the anxiety and angst and things that we're going through, the role that art has and can play in helping us to heal and also helping to bring us together. While it also reflects what is going on in our world. So sit back, relax and enjoy my conversation with Jessica Green.

Linda [00:01:49] So, Jessica, it is so great to have this opportunity to get to know you a little bit better and talk about the amazing lineup that you guys have for the Houston Cinema Arts Festival this year. It looks incredible.

Jessica [00:02:05] Oh, thank you. Well, it's such an honor to be here. And I feel so privileged that you asked me to be on your podcast, which is an amazing podcast and tool and resource. So thank you. This is really cool. Yeah.

Linda [00:02:19] I mean, there's there's so much that we can talk about, not only from the artistic perspective, but I want to get into some of your your history and your background and all kinds of nuggets and things that we're going to be able to share with our audience. So the festival kicks off on the festival.

Jessica [00:02:35] So let's start with the festival, which I am so happy to share with your audience about. We're really excited. So this is the 12th annual Housotn Cinema arts festival that's happening this year. It will be November 12th through the twenty second and it will be both virtual online and at Drive-Ins. Drive ins around Houston. So we're really excited about that, being able to provide that combination for, for our audience. And yeah, Houston Cinema Arts Festival just generally is all about the arts, right. It's all about institutions and arts festival. So it's all about the intersection of the different art forms, music, dance, theater, film, photography, all of it. So there's a lot of programing and films that are exploring the arts. Also, it's about adaptations. We tend to program, do a lot of programing that is adaptation based again on the arts theme.

Jessica [00:03:33] This year, however, we have a special theme just for twenty 20, which we're really excited about, which is Urbana, and this is based on the musical genre Musica Urbana, and that really is global pop Spanish language music that shares a through line of the transatlantic slave trade and shares through line of African culture and music. And it's all about the intermingling, especially in this part of the world in Houston that has happened between African culture and European culture and indigenous culture and the cultures, the intermingling of the Americas is.

Linda [00:04:16] Such a timely theme and obviously one that you selected for a reason. Yeah, it's really what the with the back story is.

Jessica [00:04:25] It's both timely and timeless and. Right. I mean, I've done a lot of research in particular this theme, and I research that cumbia music is based on a beat that was brought over by Africa as a drumming rhythm that was brought over, I believe, in the sixteen hundreds. So a lot of these this intermingling that we're talking about, it is this is about really centering what's already at the center right and privileging what's already privileged.

Jessica [00:04:52] Right. And this is all of this intermingling. And you know, the festival is about, OK, well, where do we find this film? Where do we find this art? Where do we find a photography, where we find it and dance and then as well and then unpacking this theme, we were reminded that Twenty Twenty is also, again, back to the Houston connection. Right. And Houston is a real ground zero for Urbana. Houston is a place where these intermingling these mixtures of culture, Afro Latino culture, all of it has been happening for so long and is just in the water, is in the soil and has bore so much that has gone on to influence the world, including twenty twenty being the 20th anniversary of the passing of Jay Screw, Houston's own, who is an incredibly important and pivotal figure in the hip hop culture and music movement. And then also Selena. Twenty twenty is the 10th anniversary of Selena tragic murder. Then we realized we had these two figures who are so critical culturally and so beloved are so beloved. We decided we wanted to pay tribute to them. So we have some exciting programming along those lines. It's a tribute to Selena and deejays. We have a live D.J. from the screwed up records and tape shop, Houston's own on location. This will be live streamed from that, from the screwed up records and tape shop. And it's doing a live tribute to D.J. Screw. And then we have also Gracie Chavez, who is a wonderful deejay and is part of a Latin music collective in Houston, the Bumba and Collective, and actually deejays Agenor that she calls screwvia, which is like chopped and screwed and Kumbia. So this is this is where this is where this is all happening. This is where it's been happening in Houston since day one.

Linda [00:06:37] And having having the arts be so vibrant and such a part of what makes us human is just we're really fortunate. To have had such a vibrant artistic community here in Houston and and artists around the country are really struggling and hurting right now because of covid. And then, of course, we're all struggling and hurting right now because of covid. And I think that the arts have a really important part to play in our collective healing, if you will. So I would love to hear your thoughts on that and then and then segway little bit into kind of your personal backstory and thoughts about kind of where we all are and and how the arts can help us begin to move forward in this very, very contentious and anxious time.

Jessica [00:07:32] Yeah, totally. I mean, I think what you just said about the place of the arts and the power of the arts, I think in the case of this project and this festival, you know, it's both. Yeah. This kind of theoretical it is a theoretical kind of lofty ideal kind of thing. And it's also something very practical. Right. So, I mean, I think for us, it was about just being so much more intentional about what already was our approach. Right. Which is to really find the best films and the artist most representative from around the world. Right. And then really work closely also with Houston based artists who are also the best. Right. And Houston institution. So like one of the programs that were doing as a partnership with the Houston Ballet's Drive-In. So it is about also amplifying this incredible community in this time when an application is so necessary and figuring out how we are all stronger together. Right. And Houston is such a fertile ground for that, for collaboration. As I talked to you before the podcast, I've found Houston to be an incredible place for collaboration and other.

Linda [00:08:42] You've only been here for a couple. You've only been here for a couple of years.

Jessica [00:08:44] Yeah, yeah.

Linda [00:08:45] You from New York and so which is like the Mecca when it comes to the arts. So it's really great to hear you say how you feel about the Houston artistic community.

Jessica [00:08:57] That's like one of my favorite things is collaborating with arts leaders and artists in Houston who have been so generous and so collaborative and so incredible and so creative and again, so representative of these cultural influences that that really do need to be more centered and more priveleged and that's back to the Urbana theme is just like Afro Latin culture has ignited the world, it's changed the world. And it's so influential globally in the Americas, but outside of the Americas. And it's a really good time to take stock in that.

Jessica [00:09:39] So, yeah, I think in this time, it's it's about kind of using the tools that we have to bring these stories and these experiences from around the world to people's living rooms to their bedrooms, wherever your bathroom, wherever you're taking the virtual consuming, and then

also to have these drive-in programs and that kind of really that vision. Right. And then really representing I think then that also just is a reflection back of Houston, which to me I like to always describe. Houston is around the world, around the corner. So I think we're really trying to reflect that in the programming. And then again, with the lens of 2020 with this incredibly terrifying but probably with possibilities time that we're in right now, we've just really tried to be more intentional about the partnership here.

Linda [00:10:28] And you're telling you're telling such a variety of stories when you look through the lineup and we're going to link to your website so that so that our audience will be able to find the festival very easily. But when you go through and you look at the range of stories that are being highlighted and shared, it just speaks to the breadth of the human experience and helps us to see ourselves in each other, which is what this podcast is all about. And why was so excited to talk to you and to bring the festival to to bring it more to light so the people will know about it, because it's when we share those stories that we start to have some understanding of what makes us different and yet what makes us the same.

Jessica [00:11:18] Totally. Totally. Yeah. I mean, prior to a little bit less than a couple of years ago, becoming the artistic director of the Art Society and Festival, I was the director of the Masele Cinema in Harlem for about a decade, which was founded by the filmmaker Albert Masele, who directed *Gray Gardens* *Gimme Shelter* *Salesman*. It's really important, seminal American filmmaker, may he rest in peace. And he was an inventor of what's called direct cinema, where you just it's like just. This idea of like literally you're letting the camera guide you and you're really just letting life unfold, you're really just documenting what's happening in the purest way. So there's this just very, very direct relationship between the audience and the subject. Right. And he always talks about walking in another person's shoes. And art allows us to do that like we really do have to walk in another person's shoes as best we can often to really understand where they're coming from. And art is such an important skill for that. And we're just so grateful to be able to identify this work and seek it out and find it and bring it to Houston. And like men, like artists and filmmakers around the world, they are listening and they are learning and they are looking at it is such a reflection on the stories that they're telling are a reflection of so many experiences and they are representing so many different perspectives and so many different outlooks and so many different experiences. And they're constantly processing what's happening. And the field is as incredible as ever. I mean, I'm so impressed and moved by what is being produced around the planet, the kind of filmmaking that especially that especially is coming out of places like the quote unquote developing world. And it's really at this. Yes, there are. These are terrifying times, but they are pregnant with possibility. There is so much incredible expression. There's so many ways that things are opening up. That's what part of the pushback is about, actually. Right, is because things are opening up in such incredible ways that may be uncomfortable. But again, in our festival, we really are reflecting like kind of like all perspectives. There really is not exaggerating. There's something for everybody we so like now it's a good deal.

Linda [00:13:39] And yeah, it's a great deal. It's a great deal. So I've already got my pass and I can't wait I can't wait to to either go to a drive in or pull up to pull up to my computer. Yeah. Popcorn and, and watch it virtually.

Linda [00:13:55] So I want to talk a little bit about how your, your back story informs and influences the work that you do. Your dad was one of the Little Rock nine. So Ernest Green share share with us, with our audience. Just tell them briefly those who don't know about the Little Rock nine and how growing up as the daughter of someone who walked that walk, how that informs who you are now and the work that you're doing.

Jessica [00:14:34] Yeah, sort of the Lower Ninth Ward, nine African-American young people, children, really teenagers who single handedly the nine of them desegregated Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in nineteen fifty seven. This was post Brown versus Board of Education. This was a concerted, organized plan and strategy by civil rights organizers, including the NAACP in Little Rock, led by Daisy Bates, who really pivotal to the story, really important African-American organizer that really worked closely with the Little Rock 9 on that effort. And yeah, and it's just a really important chapter in the civil rights movement. It was the first televised event of the civil rights movement. The these nine children were to attend Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and then were blocked by entering by the state government in Arkansas and by the

state and city police. And then the then President Eisenhower, in response actually called in federal troops representing the US government to then escort them into the school and allow them to enter into the school.

Jessica [00:15:48] And yeah, the thinking at the time was that because it was Little Rock, Arkansas, and was considered the Upper South, that this would kind of there was something that everybody thought this. Some people thought it would go kind of smoothly and it didn't. And I guess one way that and they went to the school for a year. My father graduated from he was the only senior at the age of 15, I would add. He had skipped a couple of grades. So he experienced this. I can't even imagine an insane experience at fifteen years of age was the only one of the nine to be a senior graduated that your mother King attended his graduation. The entire public school system in the city of Little Rock was shut down the next year to avoid any further black children attending the at that time you're white public school system in Little Rock. And so then this is, I would say, also an example of how because of racism, everybody loses like more white people and anybody died in the civil war. So, I mean, because. These systems, everybody had to then figure out how to get their kids out to school in the suburbs, which is like a crazy inconvenience. So it is what?

Linda [00:16:56] So what did your what did your father share with you about how he how he managed that situation? I mean, at 15 years old. Yeah. What is what is he remember, on an emotional level or.

Jessica [00:17:11] I mean. Yeah, I mean on the one hand, which we can all imagine, those of us especially that were perhaps young a while ago, or perhaps those of us that are young now that might be checking out this podcast. You know, there was a sense of invincibility, frankly, because he was so young and they were so young, but they were, of course, also really scared. And it should be said that there there were times and things that were really scary. And I am part of the industry, civil rights groups. And I talked to young people about this all the time. And it's really a story of bullying also. And the soldiers that Eisenhower had enlisted to protect them were not always there. They were not in the hallways. They were not in the bathrooms, in the bathroom. So they were at risk. They were attacked. And it was it was very scary and very dangerous. And, of course, they had been taught the nonviolent philosophy and approach. And so they they had to put that to use and respond in and based on a nonviolent philosophy to whatever was being thrown their way. So it was it was really, really hard. But they just I mean, my father talked about was as the kind of, you know, I don't know, anger, contentiousness, kind of like Rose.

Jessica [00:18:38] He as a young person, he thought more and more about, well, wow, what's in the school? Why are they trying to keep me out? Like, this is what I need to be if this is in that kind of like teenage rebellious kind of way in a way that's productive and positive and propelled him, it's just like, well, if they're trying to deny me this right, I want to see what I'm going to see this through. So I think he also had had that thought. I think that it was for all of them, incredibly defining. It's basically another family, you know, the Little Rock, and they're like aunts and uncles. Their kids are like cousins. Honestly, it's it's something that has bonded them and defined them since they went through that together. It's something they really went through together. And they have an incredible, incredible shows that are remaining there now, eight remaining.

Linda [00:19:28] So so when you became aware of what your father went through at that time and the place that it has in civil rights history, first of all, how old were you when you found out when he started talking to you about this? How did you synthesizer.

Jessica [00:19:45] I was pretty young. I mean, I think I have a kind of consciousness of consciousness of it, probably from like five on. Yeah, but it's not the same. It's not the consciousness I had. And I think that dovetails with my own experience and my own choices. I mean, I would say, first off, shout out to eyes on the prize. That was something for me where this was my actual father. But I was a teenager at the time when that series. And I mean, that was very foundational. And that kind of gets into my thinking about the power of story, the power of amplification, the power of putting a spotlight on something, the power of seeing what is unseen, showing what is unknown and then framing and then how you again, back to Daisy Bates. She was like she would be a marketing PR whiz. Now, she was incredibly adept at figuring out how to present the story, which is not hard.

Jessica [00:20:40] She had amazing to use, were beautiful, brilliant, gorgeous little children. She had incredible tools to work with. These were some of the most wonderful students in the state. So and just beautiful children as all children are beautiful. So she was really adept at her presentation of them. And then that was something that was shared with the planet. So through mass media, through time, through film, really, and then that put the planet on their side. Yes, there were these horrible forces that were against them, putting people at the highest level of government, the governor of Arkansas, blah, blah, blah.

Linda [00:21:19] So there's such an interesting sort of connection that just kind of flashed in my in my mind as you were talking about the amplification in the story and getting the planet on the side of the Little Rock nine. So let's fast forward to George Floyd and the global outpouring of all of a sudden shared understanding. Racism that could not be denied because it was in your face, so connect those dots for me between the Little Rock nine and George Floyd and the the trying to get the global support for the poor, the poor, the mission, if you if you will. Yeah, I'd love to know what you're doing.

Jessica [00:22:16] All it all connects up. I mean, and what you're saying actually is remind me of something really important that I need to share. And let me just say about my father, like I learn new stuff every year. It's incredible. And that's why I love talking to young people, because it'll be a shout out to educators. It'll be in the context of these incredible educators that have done such an incredible job with young people in their sections, in their curriculum about Little Rock nine. And these teenagers will end up sharing things with me that I didn't know. And then I'll go back and that's my dad. And he'll be like, Yeah, that's it. So I'm always learning more about his experiences, all of their experiences. I mean, it's so it's so vast. And, yeah, I'm so proud of him and I'm so proud of them. They change this country. They risk their lives to do so. I can't even imagine what choice they would make given that given that opportunity. Who knows? But they did it. It's just incredible. And I'm so grateful for the recognition that they've received. And the other thing I would just say that I've also said when I've talked to people like we all have these forces of nature, of nature and our families, we all have people that fought really hard for the rights of their community, of their families, and in that fight helped us get to where we are, especially in this country, especially if you're American. So I'm grateful that my father and I have gotten the recognition that they have. And I hope that other people will receive similar because a lot of people that did stuff like that that maybe didn't get that recognition. But that said, speaking of like. Yeah, centering and pinpointing. So, yeah, also shout out to love country. I would recommend that to anybody that hasn't watched it. They just and come to America. It's really interesting. And they just didn't. Emmett Till episode. And this is a really good example of how story is used at the high. I would say this is something that is just in terms of craft is pretty much at the highest level monetarily, too. I mean, it's just amazing because it just this lush green and she's amazing. So that was that was really pivotal to my father. Like, when I and that I learned more recently it was Emmett Till that really, really, which is there's definitely a through line. Right. Emmett Till, George Floyd and Brianna Taylor. And there's that line from Emmett Till and also the power of media. Right. And the power of documentation. The power of story. Mamie Till, Emmett Till's mother, may she rest in peace, made this brave, incredibly bold choice, especially given the time that she was operating in to have the funeral, have the casket, the open casket. Then Jet magazine, Jet and Ebony made the bold decision to publish that photo.

Jessica [00:24:51] I believe they were the first or one of the first or they had very, very large impact because it was such a big platform. So this is a really good example of the power of story and media in showing what is shown, seeing what is unseen. And and that was that was the biggest factor. My father was about the same age. And what he when he said when he found out what they did to him, he was like, oh, no, I don't see, I'm going to be doing this. You know what I mean? So we're we are we there is so much continuity here. We are all in a long line in the struggle. The struggle for sure continues, you know, and yeah, I mean, it's definitely it's all very interconnected in terms of these histories, in terms of these realities. Of course, we all wish we were further along, but I think there is a new opportunity to push on. We know all the things that are happening now around this moment that are different. Right. That are exciting and have potential. And we understand also the power. The other through line for sure is, again, the the media tools. It's not a coincidence that the earlier period of the civil rights movement and the anti Vietnam War movement coincided with the advent of television, the advent of that technological

tool. It's not a coincidence that these movements have all come up in this era of social media, social media. So there's always there's always this this coexistence of of story and centering and narrative and mass mobilization and movements. And they're always interacting in these powerful ways. And we are I would I'm bias. I'm in the media business. I'm in the content business. So I do kind of see the world maybe a bit more through that lens than other people. But I also appreciate and I'm fascinated by how things. Evolve and see what's happening now as part of a broader evolution.

Linda [00:26:56] Yeah, and there's just you and you also have you also have the perspective of being of mixed race. Yes. So your mom is white. Yes. Talk about that lens, that lens through which you see kind of where we are now as a as a society, as a as a world, as as a human race.

Jessica [00:27:20] Yeah. Well, I think we have a long way to go. And I think that regardless of anybody's race or background, I think folks broadly really have to commit to anti-racism. And that's different from saying I'm not racist. And I think this is where we're at is that we're and this is something that I, I don't know, did so much for me. Look, I have I mean, these are my thoughts about the whole mixed race thing. I think that I'm always I always push back a little bit on that because I also don't want to do this kind of like fetishization, magical, mixed race that somehow gives you some perspective. I think just somebody who would be self defined. And I define myself as a black woman with a white mother. So that's the way I self define. But I think somebody could have very a very, very similar outlook as me based on having similar upbringing, similar class backgrounds, similar education, and not have a white mother. So I just I think it's a little I think it's complex. I think, like her perspective is actually interesting. I think being a white woman that raises black children is interesting. And I think that maybe it's more in some ways transformative for them.

Jessica [00:28:33] That experience kind of opens their eyes in a way that my mom is pretty hard on white racism and I think she's probably just gotten harder on she's gotten older. So I think that comes from the experience to a certain extent of having black children. But yeah, so I think my my background is, you know. Yeah.

Jessica [00:28:56] Like anybody else, I think my background definitely is for sure defines who I am and as the the lens, the lens through which I see things, I would also wonder how much how self aware I might there might be ways that I'm not self aware about that. Right. As I could be because it's my background. I think also the generational tease. I think I'm very much gen x also. And I think the older I've gotten, I think that also this role of being a bridge is real. And I think that really informs how I see kind of technology and movement and just really being in between the 60s generation and the millennials and Gen Z and kind of being somewhere in between this generation that is so adapt this new digital native generation and then this generation that was sort of around for this incredible movement.

Jessica [00:29:48] Right. And was right. That happened. So I also yeah, I feel pretty defined by that and I'm cool with that. And I think that's a good place to be at the age I'm at. Like, you're not so young kind of shiny thing. It's like, how can I be a bridge? And I try to, you know, kind of cool into that in my programing. And so.

Linda [00:30:11] Yeah. So that's that's a glad you said that because I was just thinking that I'm wondering what what you think the role of the arts can, should will be as we move forward, post election, post all the stuff that's going on right now.

Linda [00:30:32] How do you how do you see the artistic community responding in this moment and and helping not only to make us feel better, which are always does it just puts a smile on your face and takes us sometimes out of the presence of whatever it is that's bothering us. But at the same time, it reflects what's going on in the world. So where do you see the arts in general going and used in Cinema Arts Festival in particular, since you are leading that effort?

Jessica [00:31:06] Yeah, totally. And I just I'm going to add to that. But I just because it was a really long time and I just want to try something else that you said and I didn't come up with that. But it's really important in terms of the mixed race, biracial identity thing. It's a social reality. Right. And I think that's also important to like when I first went to like the continent of Africa and I came

back, I was amazed at how mixed all black Americans look to me. And this is the history of slavery and all of all that followed that. Right. So biologically, so many black Americans are of our mixed race. Right. Myself and myself included. So, I mean, I think that's where it is having its. The lens of having a white parent and I guess what I would say about that at its best rate, at its best, it's complicated and there's conflict and there's sometimes misunderstanding and things that really have to be discussed across racial lines at its very best there. In my case, at least, there isn't any question of having a white person that would like literally risk their lives for me and loves me on that. So I don't know I don't know what how that affects things. But I would say that's that's the thing. When you have a white parent and you're a person of color, if you're lucky and most parents love their kids. Right. It's just that you have experienced this love that transcends these barriers. But I think people can express that is right. You could be in a relationship. You can have really a best friend. That's a different race. Like I think these things work out and this is America. So these things end up like emerging and all these different ways for a lot of different people. So anyway, I just wanted to answer your question or thought so, And hopefully that was.

Linda [00:32:45] No, it was so glad you went back to that. And I'm sorry I cut you off in the middle. I didn't mean to do that.

Jessica [00:32:50] No, no, you didn't cut me off. I just didn't really answer it completely. And then I remembered this idea that I thought was so fresh that something else mixed race had said to me. And I was like, yeah, man, that's right. It's like we're talking about a social reality. And part of understanding the history of race in this country is understanding that biologically. I mean, what was it like Strom Thurmond and Al Sharpton are related? Like, what else do you need to know? That's America like that tells you like this is the country all you need to know right there. Yeah.

Jessica [00:33:17] So so. Ah yeah. I mean, I think, you know, I think art has always played this role of of reflecting forecasting a bit, you know, being a bit of a crystal ball of what is to come, but also reflecting what is you know, it's always played that that role. I think it plays that role now. I think it hits differently because of because of the loss, because of the mourning. There's so many I mean, so many societies are in mourning right now and have lost so many people. So I think all these the power of it, it just it just I think it just hits a bit different as far as Houston and the festival. And I think they'll probably be even more of a pivot to I would I would imagine that there's going to be more of a pivot to a kind of localization at a kind of like local experience and representation and more kind of resources going to things being more kind of regionally explored or locally explored at the same time. Right. It's these two extremes. There's that. Right. Yeah, really the local and global thing, I think is going to continue to to really kind of be a factor in how things play out. I mean, I don't know for certain, but I'm just speculating. And then then on the flip side is just this whole digital space space has exploded and that cat is out of the bag. It's not going to go back in the kind of virtual programing space, the kind of digital programing space that just kind of took a big leap right in the head, because we're going to do what we do. We're going to express ourselves. We're going to sing our songs.

Linda [00:35:05] We're going to do it and figuring it out. And it's amazing just to have seen that the transition from mid-March when everything first got locked down, when you look at the quality of the productions that have been been placed in front of us from from the television news side of things, when the first couple of days when everybody started anchoring from home and with their cats, that looked like and and now entire television series are being produced in quarantine. Yeah. You know, I mean, this the the creativity that it takes to say, OK, so this is what we have to adapt to and now we're going to adapt and we're going to continue to live our best lives. To paraphrase Oprah. Right. We're going to continue to live our best lives even though we're in this this pandemic. I can't wait to see what art is going to come out of this time. I think it's going to be spectacular. I can't wait to see the dances that are choreographed and the the songs that are written and the plays that are produced. Can you imagine the richness of the material that we're going to get to consume?

Jessica [00:36:28] And some of it's already happening and happening. Yeah. And shout out to Harrison Guy who sings on Harrison Guy Urban Souls and Love Harrison. Yeah, we're going to have. Yeah. A dance dance urbanize. Yeah. This is, this is these are new movements and new pieces that he has put together and that's going to be part of the. To yeah, some of this

choreography, along with the conversation with him in that package and yeah, no, I mean to be really.

Jessica [00:36:58] Yeah, totally. That's where it's at man. And that's really that's the. Yeah. That's what's really besides Houston and Houston as a musician, as an incredible inspiration. I mean I think that's what's guiding me. That's what's guiding our team. We're just we're part of a broader community and we're just trying to rise to the occasion and do the best that we can with the resources that we have to provide the best festival we have and to provide the most here on programming that we can in the safest way and maybe as much as possible. There is a global pandemic. Yeah. To really rise to the occasion, be part of this community of leadership. That is.

Jessica [00:37:42] Yeah, it's so inspiring. I mean, it's so inspiring what's happening and it's so inspiring what people are doing. And it's definitely for me what has been kept me going just kind of like, OK, how can what we do be part of this conversation. People are doing such incredible work, such inspiring work and yeah, expression finds a way out, finds a way. It's incredibly urgent and important to have art right now for sure and to have a way to process. Sometimes art explores things that are just difficult to express otherwise and can express the unconscious. It can express things that are very difficult to express in other ways that are that are uncomfortable. And it can be the complete opposite. It can be just a joyful release.

Linda [00:38:36] That's what makes it so beautiful.

Jessica [00:38:38] Yeah, there's so many facets. So beautiful. Yeah. So I mean it's yeah.

Jessica [00:38:43] It's a it's a really interesting time. But we also of course we want, we want a vaccine. We want some resolution. We want some evolution of best practices. There is so much art that obviously is very difficult to produce under the circumstances. I mean but yeah. Darn if everybody isn't trying.

Linda [00:39:07] Right, it's I mean it is it is. It is amazing. And the and the good news is that whether people are in Houston or elsewhere, they can participate in the Houston cinema arts is virtual. Yeah.

Linda [00:39:19] So so you can go online and again, we're going to have links in the show notes and by your pass and you go up to your favorite device of choice and you want to watch these films.

Jessica [00:39:34] Over 40 films, myriad conversations, myriad performances, myriad live stream events, drive in events. I mean, it's yeah, it's really an amazing film and stories and films and filmmakers from all over the world, Hong Kong, Nigeria, everywhere, all over.

Linda [00:39:51] Awesome. Jessica Green, it has been such a pleasure having this conversation with you. I'm so thrilled to meet you. And when we chatted before the podcast started, I told you, OK, you're in my world now. So as far as I'm concerned, we're friends. And I would love to collaborate with you going forward or like minds and wanting to bring people together. In my former life, I was a dancer, and that's a whole other conversation. So we'll have to talk about that offline. So, yeah, I'm passionate. I'm very passionate about the arts and I love what you're doing. And thank you so much for taking the time to to share yourself and all that the Houston Cinema Arts Festival is doing for our community.

Jessica [00:40:31] So thank you so much, Linda. I'm going to take you up on that.

Linda [00:40:34] You got it.

Jessica [00:40:36] Thank you so much.

Linda [00:40:36] Got it.

Jessica [00:40:37] So grateful that I could do this.

Linda [00:40:43] Again, the Houston Cinema Arts Festival runs from November 12th through November 22nd. You can find the link in the show notes on [Our Voices Matter podcast.com](https://www.ourvoicesmatter.com), thanks so much for taking the time to share your day with us. And please, during this crazy time that we're living in, let's remember to all take a deep breath and stay calm and remember to give each other permission to speak and have the courage to listen with an open mind.

Linda [00:41:14] We'll see you next time.