

Drag Becomes Him
behind the scenes

JINKX MONSOON

Drag Becomes Him

Drag Becomes Him provides an intimate glimpse inside the life of internationally acclaimed drag performer Jinkx Monsoon. This raw and affectionate film follows the passionate pursuits that transformed a working class boy in a struggling family to an illustrious performer on a global stage.

Influenced by a grandmother with charm school polish, Jerick Hoffer learned to fuse the sophistication of a southern belle with the crass behavior of a working girl. Jinkx Monsoon has what RuPaul describes as “a stage left, off center kind of quality.”

Drag Becomes Him follows Jinkx’s trajectory from a small stage in Portland, Oregon through a growing career in Seattle to the relinquishing of the crown one year after winning RuPaul’s Drag Race.

Expanded from the acclaimed five-part web series of the same name, this cherished portrayal of Jinkx Monsoon peels back the layers on one of the brightest stars on the drag circuit.



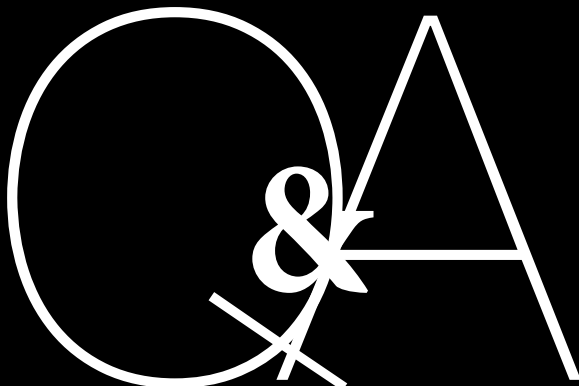


Alex Berry

director



*Alex Berry works as a freelance videographer and editor in Seattle. Originally from Kentucky, Berry moved to Seattle after attending film school in Tempe, Arizona. Berry and Jerick Hoffer, aka Jinx Monsoon, have been friends for several years and began filming *Drag Becomes Him* as a web series in 2011, two years before Jinx starred on RuPaul's *Drag Race*. To make the feature documentary, Berry combined footage from the original web series with new footage and interviews with Jerick's family and friends. *Drag Becomes Him* is Berry's first feature film.*



How did the idea for DBH come about?

I made this video for a local production company here in Seattle called Quite Productions and they do different video projects each month on a different topic. They were doing one about gender and they asked me to submit a video. I thought of my friend Jerick because he explores gender with drag. I decided to post it on YouTube just for fun, and slowly it started to get a lot of views—and this was before he went on RuPaul. Somehow people were finding it and were interested in this totally unknown person. But it was just for fun at the time—I never planned on making it a feature film.

The footage you shot is really intimate.

What was it like to film?

It felt really fun and natural. It reminded me of my childhood. I started out shooting a lot of videos of my little sister when we were young. We'd make little short films. The way we shot it was very similar [to DBH] in that we made everything up as we went along, we didn't plan anything or think anything out. We just let it happen, and that's how I like to work. That's how Jerick and I work together, so it just felt like I was filming my little sister again. The style that I used [when I was younger], I still use now.

How would you describe that style?

I like really intimate, closeup, personal shots.

I put an emphasis on emotion, so it's more about feeling the scene rather than thinking about it so much. I really like the camera to feel like a character—like a person watching. I move the camera a lot so that it feels like a person, I don't use tripods or dollies. I'm also influenced by music, because I'm a musician. I think I shoot and edit in the same way I write music, with a flow or a rhythm.

So how do you choose a rhythm for a scene?

I'll find a rhythm in a scene—it's musical in a way. With the camerawork and the cuts, it's almost like I'm writing a song. It's the same muscle.

Taking that into consideration, what's your favorite scene in the film?

I really love the scene at the end, where [Jerick] is undressing. We see him all throughout the film getting ready, putting makeup on, performing. And then at the end we see him take it all off. And I love the song I chose for it—it's a song by my friend Intisaar and I really love her music. The song is called "Sequins," and it just fits perfectly with him deconstructing and returning back to Jerick.

Is the rhythm different when you're filming Jinx versus filming Jerick?

Yeah, there's a difference. Jinx is very on-fire and energetic and sharp and witty, and Jerick is more...he's very quiet and he has a very introverted side to him. He's much more relaxed. He's Jerick.

What was the best aspect of filming this?

I really loved the fact that I was able to just experiment and come into my own style more. I got to experiment a lot. I loved and was grateful that Jerick let me do whatever I wanted. He didn't say, "cut that scene" or, "I don't like the way I look in this scene." He never made me change anything, and that humanizes it and allows real life to be seen. All the elements, which is what I try to capture. The pretty and the ugly and the weird and the strange. Sometimes I would send my mom the episodes before I posted them because I wanted her opinion. She always loved it, but sometimes she'd say, "Are you sure he's gonna want you to use this shot of him in bed with his hair all crazy?" And I was like, yeah, he'll be fine with it, and that's what was so awesome.

There are a lot of getting-ready scenes in the film. What's it like being in the dressing room before a drag show?

It's a lot of commotion and it's funny, because drag queens have crazy senses of humor. There are some diva moments, where there's some yelling and drama.

But there's always this unconditional love, like a family. They have their own slang, like their own language. They call each other out and read each other, but it's all affectionate. It's a totally different communication style. Oh, and it's always really hot. It smells sweaty. And like perfume. But like, men's sweat and perfume.

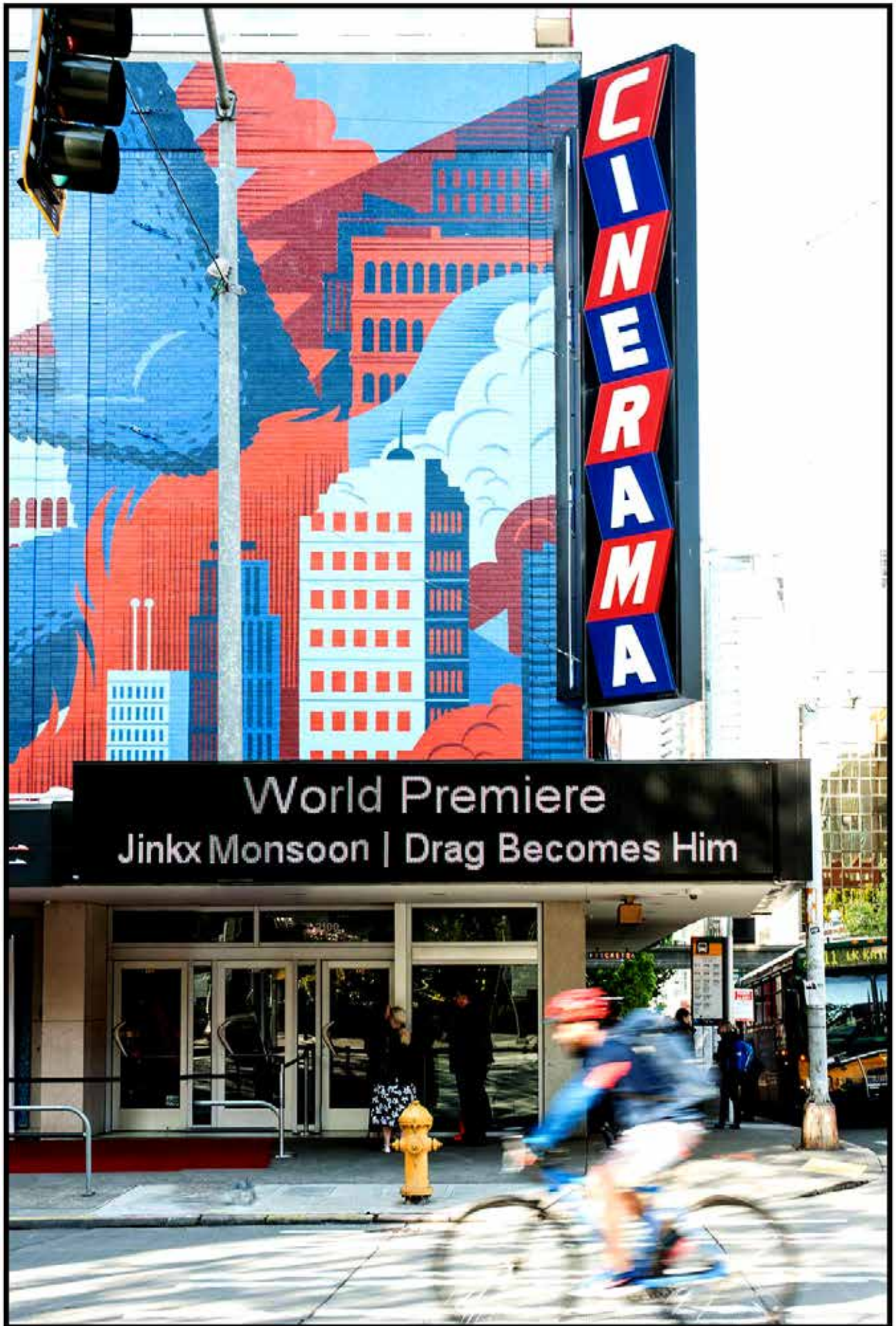
What do you see as the theme(s) of the film?

Relationships, and how important support is from the people you're in relationships with. Everyone really believed in [Jerick]. You just see something in him that you want to lift up. So I tried to capture that—the influence he's had from his family and friends who have all woven their support into his life. It's not just a drag movie, it's not just a gay movie. There's a lot of layers to it. It's about an artist — a kid who has big dreams — who [achieves them] by staying true to himself. I think it's a story a lot of people will relate to.

This is your first feature... Do you have more in the works?

Yeah. I kind of want to do a narrative. To be honest, I never intended to make documentaries, but I guess I make documentaries now. And I like it a lot. ■

"It's more about feeling the scene rather than thinking about it"



Premiere Night Photographs by Regan MacStravic, Nate Gowdy, John Martinotti, Brooklyn Benjestorf



premiere night





contributors

*basil shadid,
producer*



What was the biggest challenge producing the film?

The real challenge was in our thinking about how to go from a popular web series to a feature film. They are both very different mediums. You can't just slap together 5 episodes of a web series and call it good. When I first started working on the project with Alex Berry, we had to take a step back and think of the whole story we wanted to tell. Then we had to make a plan for filling the gaps. Who would we interview? How would we incorporate the new footage? Could we get new footage and keep it stylistically consistent to the previously shot stuff. Then, could we assemble it in a way that makes people want to sit with the material for a full hour and a half.

What aspect of producing this film are you most proud of?

I'm most proud of the way that we were able to stay true to the intimate style and approach of the web series. The film remains a testament to the closeness that Alex and Jerick share. It truly gives us a deep view into the life of Jinkx Monsoon.

*intisaar jubran,
songwriter*



What was the best part of contributing to the film?

I have had the pleasure of watching Jinkx's incredible journey for several years now. Knowing that one of my songs could elevate the film of her story was a huge honor, because she is a genuine artist and is truly inspirational to me.

What is the song "Sequins" about?

Sequins is up for interpretation, of course, since most of the lyrics in it are image-based abstractions. But for me, it is a journey through the emotional condition of being an artist. Most of the time things are uncertain and you feel all of this doubt, only to be rewarded every once in a while with the euphoria of true, unfettered self-expression. When you find your medium and really get into crafting it, it can feel as if everything in your life, the good, the unpleasant, the ugly, all of it, makes perfect sense.

What did you like most about the film?

I really loved how Alex Berry chose his shots, and also how the sequence of events did not place Jinkx's Drag Race win as the pinnacle or climax of her narrative. In truth, she is a multi-faceted artist whose potential reaches far beyond any television show. Alex captured her beautifully, and gave the impression of a story that is still very much alive and unfolding. I wanted to keep watching even after it was over.

*brendan hogan,
sound design*



What was the most challenging part about the sound design for this film?

The most challenging part of the mix was wrangling the audio from the interviews. The film was shot run-and-gun style with a one man crew in lots of real world noisy environments. So getting that as cleaned up as possible and creating something reasonably consistent was the most time consuming and challenging aspect of the film.

What part are you most proud of?

The best part was working with Alex Berry. I really appreciated his unique take on documentary film making as a whole and the creative license he gave me to take the sound design in some rather strange directions. I'm always appreciative and most proud of my work when sound is given an opportunity to be a creative story telling device and not just a technical consideration. I would also like to mention and thank Noah Bonds who did the initial dialog edit and my business partner Jamie Hunsdale who performed all the Foley for the film. He would like everyone to know that the wedgie scene sounds so real because those are genuine custom performed ass grabs in there.

*jedediah bernards,
composer*



What was the best part of contributing to the film?

The best part was, well... making the music. It was such a nice process to make small music portraits of Jerick, someone I've known since I was just a brat in Portland. Getting to step back and really hear him in the notes made me smile every time.

How did you decide how to write music to each scene?

In each of the pieces made for the film, the goal was to embody a sort of waddling, luscious, awkward charm. My memories of Jerick are threaded with that. I loved detuning things just enough against each other, using funny instrument combinations, and finding the beauty in all of those unexpected places.

What's the biggest challenge when composing music for a film?

Not getting to write more! Jerick is such a muse to me and it was a challenge to navigate such a flow of inspiration to a few minutes. Though, part of me is glad I only got to worry about the right accessories, while everyone else ran around making the whole big outfit.

on camera interviews



Jerick Hoffer,
Jinkx Monsoon



Benjimen Blair,
Sylvia O'Stayformore



Deanne Hoffer,
Jerick's mom



Jacob Hoffer,
Jerick's brother



Melissa Hoffer,
Jerick's aunt



Kevin Kauer, Editor in
Chief of Nark Magazine



Marc Kenison,
Waxie Moon



Zan Gibbs, Former
SMYRC Coordinator



Brian Daniel Peters,
Mama Tits



Amanda Russel,
Jerick's friend



Nick Sahoyah,
Collaborator



Jessie Underhill,
Jerick's friend



Michelle Visage,
RuPaul's Drag Race



Jason Wikander,
Jerick's dad



Jeremy Wikander,
Jerick's brother

film credits

DIRECTED BY

Alex Berry

PRODUCED BY

Basil Shadid

STARRING

Jerick Hoffer as Jinkx Monsoon

PRODUCED BY

Michael Strangeways
Jacob Leander

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Lara Sanderson
Jeff Sanderson

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

DUAL POWER

billie rain
Alix Kolar

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Alex Berry

EDITING

Alex Berry
Basil Shadid

ON CAMERA INTERVIEWS

Benjimen Blair, Sylvia O'Stayformore
Deanne Hoffer, Jerick's mom
Jacob Hoffer, Jerick's brother
Melissa Hoffer, Jerick's aunt
Kevin Kauer, Editor in Chief of Nark
Marc Kenison, Waxie Moon
Zan Gibbs, Former SMYRC Coordinator
Brian Daniel Peters, Mama Tits
Amanda Russel, Jerick's friend
Nick Sahoyah, Collaborator
Jessie Underhill, Jerick's friend
Michelle Visage, RuPaul's Drag Race
Jason Wikander, Jerick's dad
Jeremy Wikander, Jerick's brother

POST PRODUCTION SUPPORT

by JAYA PRODUCTIONS

Nikki Jones - Editor
Alex Perrault - Editing Supervisor

COLORIST

Joel Voelker

AUDIO POST PRODUCTION

by IMPOSSIBLE ACOUSTIC

Brendan J. Hogan - Sound Designer
Jamie "Foley Rambo" Hunsdale - Foley Artist
Noah Bonds - Dialogue Editor

PERFORMERS

Roxxy Andrews
Richard Andriessen
Pandora Boxx
Jaxen Brown
Peaches Christ
Bianca Del Rio
Adore Delano
Ben DelaCreme
Sydni Deveraux
Alyssa Edwards
Fuchsia Fox
Lou Henry Hoover
Detox Icunt
Kitten Larue
Aleksa Manila
Coco Montrese
Shanghai Pearl
RuPaul
Cherdonna Shinatra
Jamie Von Stratton
The Luminous Pariah
Alaska Thunderfuck
Mama Tits
Ivy Winters

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Darcy Walker

PRODUCER SUPPORT

Beth Bristol
Julia Hechler
Kit McGurn

RESEARCHERS

Katelyn Baron
Jodie Mae Finch
Edna Paulet
Mary Trujillo

NYC CREW

Eli Brown - Camera Operator
Ron Lasko - Location Support
Chip Duckett - Location Support

SEATTLE INTERVIEW CREW

Margaret Longley - Camera Operator
Riley Morton - Camera Operator
Alix Kolar - Production Manager
Kelsey Wood - Sound Mixer
Rory Emmons - Gaffer
Peaches Myers - Location Support

SUPPORT TEAM FOR JINKX MONSOON

David Charpentier - Management
Kenneth Lee, Assistant
Christine M. Bateman - Publicist
Evan Rodd - Social Media Manager

ARCHIVAL STILLS

Jerick Hoffer
Melissa Hoffer
Justin Huertas
Zan Gibbs
Christopher Nelson
Amanda Russel
Jason Wikander

ARCHIVAL MOTION PICTURES

The Carol Burnett Show, Burngood
Roseanne, A Stash From The Past,
Carsey-Werner Company
Married With Children, Embassy Television
Antonio Hicks, Seattle Theatre Group: STGtv
LadyNormaJean12
Logo TV
The Beales of Grey Gardens, Maysles Films
Mark Middleton, Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center, Portland, OR
Kozzma Monsoon
Mommy Dearest, Paramount Pictures
Nick Sahoyah
Rylee Stearns
Tamara Thompson, Serious Take Productions
Who Framed Roger Rabbit, Touchstone Pictures
Frederick Tschernutter
Death Becomes Her, Universal Pictures
Perry Wales
Kelly Walker
Batman Returns, Warner Bros
World of Wonder

MUSIC

Bayangobi
Acid Mothers Guru Guru
AMT Label

Bozza Duetтино for Two Bassoons
Grossman, Ewell, Grainger
Pandora Records

Dangerous Thought

Stingray
Blue Dot Sessions

Dirty 4 the DJ

Kitty Kitty Bang Bang

Finish Lines

Jedediah Bernards

Foresight

Alex Berry

G-Rated

Eric Goetz
ASCAP

Hermit Song

Jedediah Bernards

film credits

MUSIC

Madame's Theme
Jedediah Bernards

Punks Not Dead It Just Smells Funny
Lee Rosevere

Rain Down and Fall Away
adcBicycle
Southern City's Lab

Riding in My 1950s Sedanette
Owl Oxidant
Black Planet Records

Sequins
Intisaar Jubran

Sleepy Groove
Asthmatic Astronaut
Black Lantern Music

Sticker Bushes
Alex Berry

Stingray Theme
Stingray
Blue Dot Sessions

Summertime
Jedediah Bernards

Swing Gitane
The Underscore Orkestra
Bad Panda Records

That Hill It Has Already Gone Away
adcBicycle
Southern City's Lab

The Best Outfit for the Day
Jedediah Bernards

Transfiguration no. 1
Hanna Benn

Troll of the Mountain Swing
The Underscore Orkestra
Bad Panda Records

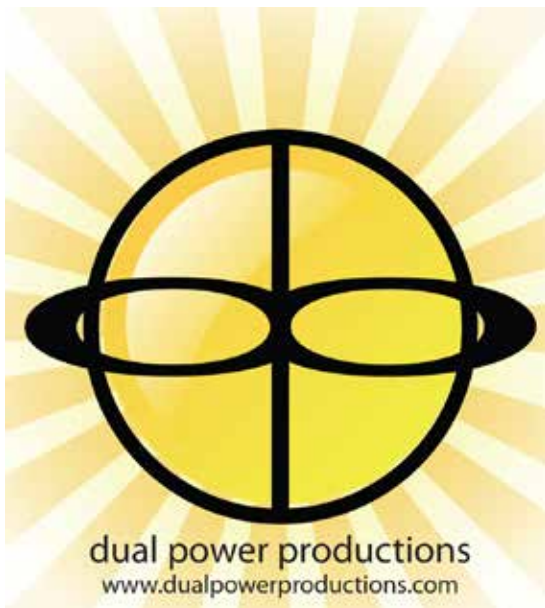
Weissenborn, Six Trios for Three Bassoons
Grossman, Ewell, Grainger
Pandora Records

Wrinkled Wrinkled Little Star
Eric Goetz
ASCAP

THANK YOU
Ryan Anderson
Cali Beintema
Sharyn Berry
Blue Dot Sessions
Noa Bonneh
Jane Buck
Ben Cunning
Samie Detzer
Mark R. Finley
Tatiana Folling
Rebecca Freer
Anne Glickenhau
Jimmy Gonzalez

Peter Gula
Ross M. Hayduk
Kendra Holmquist
Kelly L. Inabnett
Cielo Keller
Sharon King
Gabriela Ledezma
Susan Littlefield
Isaac Lummis
Lori Madson
Er Marie
Craig McKenney
Jill Morley
Douglas Naylor
Erin O'Beirne
Quiet Productions
Rational Interaction
Roberta Ortiz
Mary Rose Petrozola
Eladio Preciado
Aaron J Ranney
Christina Ravnholt
Thairin Smothers
Mary Elizabeth Trujillo
Robbie Turner
Jessie Underhill
Brandon Voss
Kelly Walker
David Whisler
Jordan White
Corey Wood
World of Wonder

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What's the message? In the words of Alice Walker, "Surely the earth can be saved by all the people who insist on love." In the words of Utah Phillips, "You've got to mess with people!"

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“I feel like I have this responsibility to always be staying true to the message that I put forth at the beginning of all of this. To make the world a better place than you found it and to not let the little things get to you and to always be the kind of person that you want the world to perceive you to be.”

Jinkx Mansoon

