

BIO | 2023

EMMAI ALAQUIVA

Emmy Award-Winner | Film Director | Photographer | Multi-Disciplinary Artist

Testing the limitations of what is possible, Emmaï Alaquiva is manufacturing the future of digital art across the multiverse of mindful media. “The sky is *not* the limit,” says Alaquiva, a four-time Emmy Award-winning film director, photographer and composer. As proven in his dynamic body of work, Alaquiva skillfully showcases the soulful account of humanity while becoming one of the most distinguished trailblazers in the creative arts industry.

Alaquiva isn't just an arts-in-media innovator, he is also an entrepreneur creating employment opportunities in the digital landscape. In 2001 he launched the contemporary, full-service digital multimedia company Ya Momz House. “Our commitment is to tell stories,” says Alaquiva. His entrepreneurial efforts have been recognized by several publications, including the *Pittsburgh Business Times*, upon which he was named *Top CEO of the Year*, nationally honored by *Black Enterprise Magazine* as *BE 100 Modern Man of Distinction* and most notably as a national *BM Community Leader* recognized by President Barack Obama.

Alaquiva's innate ability to execute a narrative from behind-the-lens has ushered in countless triumphs for his work. Achievements include a 2017 Emmy Award nomination for his international directorial film debut for “*Ghetto Steps*”. The film was selected by the City of Pittsburgh to be included in the short film, *Future. Forged. For All.*, a marketing campaign for Amazon's announcement of the global brand's second headquarters. In 2021, Alaquiva accepted the honors of two Emmy Awards for his social justice work being selected by Google as a contributing film director for the global release of the *Google Year in Search* film. Most recently, Alaquiva wrote and directed the PSA, *Unspeakable* that aims to amplify the voices of the Deaf, hard-of-hearing and those with audiological conditions. The PSA was featured on ABC's *Good Morning America*. The announcement went viral and was seen by more than 300 million people in more than 60 countries.

Cracking the code on how one man's vision with a big idea can make something from nothing, Alaquiva harnessed his way from homelessness to being appointed by Governor Tom Wolf to serve on the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts. For Alaquiva, it's his path-less-taken approach to visual storytelling that drives him. As an artist he turns to his ability to curate images that share a message. With his *OPTICVOICES: MAMA'S BOYS*, an interactive photography exhibit for social change, Alaquiva documents a mothers' resiliency through the aftermath of losing her slain son to an act-of-violence. Turning his lens from tragedy to the classroom, he is also co-founder of Hip-Hop On L.O.C.K., an award-winning arts education program for youth K-12.

Alaquiva's work has been seen and heard across the world through media giants such as CBS, Amazon and PBS to presenting on stage for TEDx talks. Celebrity projects with Oprah Winfrey, Wiz Khalifa, Martha Stewart and the late Dr. Maya Angelou skim the surface of his high-profile work. The twelve-time Telly Award-winner has also been recognized throughout Pittsburgh organizations as a *40 Under 40* powerhouse, a *50 Finest*, and a *FAB 40*. Honorably, Alaquiva has received proclamations from the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to his acknowledgment as GET Involved, Inc.'s *Man of The Year* for his community leadership. *Whirl* magazine honored Alaquiva and his wife, Patricia in their *Couples Who Make A Difference* editorial piece highlighting the Alaquiva's philanthropic efforts to raise thousands for charity.

The story behind Alaquiva could have ended at the point in his personal life when he was homeless. However, the future had a home—or a residence you should say for Alaquiva. With each year he has amassed a portfolio of work that has opened the doors to an art residency as the 2022 B.U.I.L.D. Residency Artist at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center (AWAACC). Alaquiva's *OPTICVOICES: MAMA'S BOYS* will open at the AWAACC in October 2022.

The vision of his own optic voice culminates his sensibilities as an artist and as a visionary solidifying that his home has always been within. The world is invited inside to see the art and wonder the house that Alaquiva built.

For a visual portfolio of Emma Alaquiva's work visit <https://www.emmaialaquiva.com>

Awards

2021 | Emmy Award Winner Video Essay "Black Lives Matter"
2021 | Emmy Award Winner Societal Concerns - Short Form Content (*Single Story*)
2021 | Artist of the Year nominee by Pittsburgh Magazine
2022 | B.U.I.L.D. Residency Artist - August Wilson African American Cultural Center
2020 | Emmy Award-Winner "3Rs Campaign" Boys & Girls Club of Western Pa.
2020 | Gold Telly Award Winner "Aaron Donald Football Camp"
2020 | Bronze Telly Award Winner "August Wilson African-American Cultural Center"
2020 | Keystone Media Award winner for Photography.
2019 | SHARE PITTSBURGH "Outstanding Diverse Supplier"
2018 | Smart 50 Pittsburgh "Top CEO"
2018 | Black Enterprise "BE Modern Man of Distinction"
2018 | Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Gubernatorial Appointee
2018 | Pittsburgh Business Times /Fox Rothschild "Outstanding CEO & Top Executive"
2017 | Ernst & Young Nominee "Entrepreneur of the Year"
2017 | Baker Leadership's Get Involved, Inc "Man Of The Year"
2017 | Whirl Magazine's "Couples Who Make A Difference" w/ wife
2017 | Emmy Award "Ghetto Steps" Nominee
2017 | Rev. J.A. Williams Community Leader Award
2014 | Daytime Emmy Award Nominee "Game Changers" (CBS Sports Network)
2016 | Black Male Engagement (BMe) "National Community Leader"
2008 | Emmy Award-Winner "Fly Boys Tuskegee Airmen"
2007 | Emmy Award Nominee "In Country: A Vietnam Story" (PBS)
2007 | Pittsburgh Magazine's "40 Under 40" Honoree
2011 | Whirl Magazine's "Pittsburgh 50 Finest" Honoree
2014 | New Pittsburgh Courier's "FAB 40" Honoree
2015 | New Pittsburgh Courier's "Men of Excellence" Honoree
2012 | Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh "Urban Empowerment" Award
2007 | Ten-Time Telly Award-Winner *Various years
2013 | 3 Time Pittsburgh Hip Hop Award-Winner *Various
2007 | 3 Time A.I.R. Award Winner *Various years
2010 | African American Leadership Association "Blazing Leadership Award Winner"
2013 | Coro Martin Luther King Leadership Award "Community Engagement"
2015 | UPMC Award "Inclusion Champion"

2011 / UPMC Award *"Community Champion"*
2011 | Shyne Award Winner *"Youth Group"*
2012 | YWCA Award Winner *"Community Youth"*
2012 | National Society of Black MBAs *"Entrepreneur of the Year"*
2013 | Style Week Award *"Trailblazer of the Year"*

City/County Proclamations

June 6, 2014 | *"Emmai Alaquiva Day"*, Allegheny County- Mayor Bill Peduto
June 6, 2014 | *"Emmai Alaquiva Day"*, Allegheny County- Councilman Tom Baker
March 28, 2017 | "2017 Service Summit Award Winners", Allegheny County- Ritz Fitzgerald
January 28, 2017 | Coro Pittsburgh *"Distinguished Individual Leadership"*
February 2013 | *"Black Music Mogul"*, Allegheny County- Mayor Luke Ravenstahl

Philanthropic/Community Affiliations

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts (Appointee)
August Wilson African American Cultural Center, Arts & Culture Committee
Black Male Engagement (BMe Community)
Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh
Hip-Hop On L.O.C.K.
North Allegheny School District | Diversity Committee

Pittsburgh Black Media Federation
Remake Learning Community Champion
African American Chamber of Commerce
The Teenie Harris Archive - Community Task Force
Urban League of Young Professionals
Big Brothers Big Sisters Pittsburgh
NAACP Member