

Executive Editor

Seen

ORGANIZATION

Seen is a journal of film and visual culture focused on Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities globally, published by BlackStar twice each calendar year (Spring and Fall). It is published by BlackStar Projects in partnership with the Annenberg School for Communication at University of Pennsylvania.

BlackStar is a film-maker centric and POC-led organization that brings an intersectional analysis of race, gender and power into the work while providing high quality opportunities for artists and critics, and a thoughtfully curated experience for audiences. Founded to focus on the work of Black filmmakers (of the African diaspora), we are now dedicated to solidarity across artists and communities of color, including Black, Asian, Latinx, Arab, Native, and Indigenous while still centering anti-Black racism as core to our racial justice analysis.

BlackStar is focused on the following issues:

- ★ POC Authorship and not individual representation
- ★ Aesthetic quality over celebrity
- ★ Supporting a POC artists community, not just producing an event
- ★ Curating a high quality and accessible program

BlackStar's primary activity to date has been an annual film festival that presents genre-defying independent work predominantly outside of the mainstream, engages filmmakers with new audiences, and provides a platform for collaboration among artists. BlackStar's curatorial perspective places film in the context of documentary, journalistic, contemporary art, and visual culture more broadly, and the festival itself provides curated and accessible experiences for diverse audiences that are often left to their own whims to navigate through the plethora of online content.

THE SEARCH

The Executive Editor is a new role. After publishing two issues of *Seen* (under the leadership of the Managing Editor and Artistic Director/CEO with generous support from our inaugural Guest

Editor), we have realized we need additional capacity and administrative function. The Executive Editor will work in partnership with BlackStar's Artistic Director/CEO, Managing Editor, Art Director, and Design Associate to successfully execute and publish the journal, managing day-to-day operations. The Executive Editor will bring their unique knowledge, networks, and enthusiasm for visual culture to *Seen*, serving often as the principal representative of the publication in meetings.

The role calls for an individual with outstanding writing, editing experience, and good business acumen. The right fit would be a high-level thinker, possess great attention to detail, fantastic planning, organizational and staff management skills with the ability to work comfortably under pressure in a fast-paced environment. The Executive Editor will be a principal public voice and provide vision for the journal and lead the Managing Editor and Section Editors in conducting reviews of content submitted for publication.

The ideal candidate will bring a track record of success as a writer, scholar, or curator, and be able to demonstrate a superb command of English, while upholding a keen interest in justice and access. Experience in film and/or visual arts is ideal, as is the capacity to make quick and balanced decisions. Candidates should have interests in BlackStar's three key areas – filmmaking, visual arts, and media arts – as well as a demonstrated commitment to intersectional feminism and social justice.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Executive Editor is responsible for the overall quality of the intellectual content of the journal and for overseeing the review process to ensure it is comprehensive, rigorous, and timely. The role is responsible for upholding the mission and scope of the journal and for selecting content that provides new, original, and important contributions to the field. The Executive Editor selects section editors, editorial advisory board members, reviewers, and any other editorial positions required in developing content for the journal, including guest editors. The Executive Editor serves as chair of the editorial advisory board and oversees its work. The Executive Editor may write articles. The Executive Editor will facilitate two annual editorial advisory board meetings and prepare an annual report for BlackStar Projects' board of directors.

The primary responsibilities of the Executive Editor consist of the following:

General

- ★ The Executive Editor will oversee the mission and scope of the journal in collaboration with BlackStar Projects' Artistic Director/CEO and *Seen's* Editorial Advisory Board

- ★ The Executive Editor ensures that articles, reviews, essays, and other content published are consistent with the editorial mission
- ★ The Executive Editor is responsible for making the decision to publish any thematic issues of the journal and for soliciting authors and contributors to be published; the Editor will also identify guest editors
- ★ The Executive Editor may recommend to the publisher, BlackStar Projects, that a special issue be published in addition to the regular issues of the journal. The publisher will have the authority to approve or reject such a proposal
- ★ The Editor may write editorials for the journal
- ★ Solicit high-quality manuscripts from potential authors, decide which manuscripts to publish, and assist authors as they develop their manuscripts for publication
- ★ Act as a representative for the publication externally, network actively at industry events, and enthusiastically raise the profile of the publication
- ★ Help to develop non-traditional and first-time writers
- ★ Contribute to the recruiting and hiring process
- ★ Work in collaboration with the editorial advisory committee, and BlackStar staff to set short- and long-term goals and objectives for the journal that advance the field

Editorial

- ★ The Executive Editor is responsible for overseeing the editorial review process
- ★ The Executive Editor leads the initial brainstorming and ideation process for each issue along with the editorial team of the journal, which may include guest editor, managing editor, and BlackStar artistic director
- ★ The Executive Editor selects section editors, recommends editorial advisory board members, and plays a role in selecting other staff for the journal
 - Periodically, the Executive Editor may want to review who is serving on the editorial advisory board
- ★ The Executive Editor will provide the protocol and project management flow for editorial review
- ★ The Executive Editor will assign and solicit content from contributors and monitor quality of editing, managing the section editors
- ★ The Executive Editor will ensure that the production of the journal happens in a timely manner and that contributors receive constructive feedback
- ★ The Executive Editor will ensure that the journal follows ethical policies and be prepared to deal with errors and allegations of misbehavior
- ★ The Executive Editor will generate story ideas for contributors and support the Managing Editor with contributor outreach where necessary
- ★ Oversee photography, design and artwork to be used in the publication

- ★ Assist all staff to meet deadlines
- ★ Read each article and make substantive comments and edits for the authors in coordination with the section editors
- ★ Compose each issue's "Letter from the Editor"
- ★ Suggest pull quotes and article titles; work with the Seen editorial team to finalize
- ★ Review and approve the full issue's content when finalized
- ★ Work with *Seen*'s designer/art director on the visual direction of the issue

Marketing & Communications

- ★ The Executive Editor will seek opportunities to promote the journal
- ★ The Executive Editor will represent the journal, where possible, at conference and other events about the mission of the journal
- ★ The Executive Editor will identify indexes in which the journal should be included and pass information on to BlackStar staff
- ★ The Executive Editor will help the publisher promote the journal by identifying places, events, and individuals to whom promotional material should be sent
- ★ The Executive Editor will integrate multimedia content that will increase interest and readership of the journal
- ★ The Executive Editor will work directly with the Publisher on editorial and marketing initiatives intended to drive readership and citations for the journal
- ★ The Executive Editor will work with BlackStar's communications team to devise a public launch and outreach strategy for the issue

Administration & Fundraising

- ★ The Executive Editor will work with BlackStar CEO and Deputy Director establish annual budget and will manage that budget and expenses
- ★ The Executive Editor will provide BlackStar Projects executive staff and board with appropriate information about the editorial activities of the journal
- ★ The Executive Editor will prepare quarterly updates and an annual report according to an agreed upon schedule
- ★ The Executive Editor will share opportunities which may help to improve the journal
- ★ The Executive Editor will report any significant issues that might affect the quality and timely release of the journal
- ★ The Executive Editor will ensure that permissions, work-for-hire agreements, copyright transfer agreements, disclosures of any conflicts of interest, patient permissions, and any other documentation necessary for the publication of each contribution are obtained

- ★ The Executive Editor will report to, meet with, and seek advice from the BlackStar Executive team and/or editorial advisory board on important issues and as necessary or requested

Qualifications and Experience

For this important role, BlackStar seeks an experienced leader who is deeply committed to our mission and vision. Experience in journalism and/or arts writing is essential and the more editorial experience, the better. BlackStar has a tradition of being comfortable with ambiguity; it experiments and innovates and then follows up with reflection. Therefore, the Executive Editor must be astute enough to ask the right questions to keep BlackStar adapting and on the learning edge. The position also calls for collaborative management and team leadership skills, as well as an eye for detail and an interest and patience with internal operations and administration.

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- ★ Informed passion for BlackStar's mission, vision, and values. A demonstrated commitment to working for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- ★ Excellent strategic and intellectual abilities and analytic skill coupled with pragmatism and a roll-up-one's-sleeves attitude. Sound judgment. A willingness to innovate and learn from mistakes made along the way.
- ★ Outstanding written and oral communication skills. A communication style that is direct.
- ★ Extensive authoring and editing experience in prominent, peer-reviewed scholarly journals and a proven record of accomplishment for editing and operational excellence and timeliness.
- ★ Access to a broad network in film and/or visual arts.
- ★ Excellent organizational and interpersonal skills.
- ★ The ability to meet the time demands of the Executive Editor position.
- ★ Impeccable integrity, honesty, and a reputation for a balanced, non-ideological approach. A willingness to challenge conventional thinking coupled with the ability to collaborate effectively, listen well, and bridge philosophies.
- ★ An understanding of filmmaking and/or visual arts, and of the history of BIPOC participation in the field.
- ★ Entrepreneurial spirit and drive. An eye for creative, strategic opportunities tied to a commitment to accountability and results.
- ★ Experience working comfortably and effectively with well-known and highly visible individuals across a broad spectrum of industries.
- ★ Solid skills and experience in staff leadership, administration, financial management, budgeting, and planning. Comfort with technology.

- ★ An outgoing, open, and optimistic personality. Outstanding interpersonal skills. Tenacity, pragmatism, high energy, patience, and good humor.
- ★ An advanced degree in a relevant field would be an asset.
- ★ Demonstrable experience in producing relevant content to target audiences.
- ★ Ability to nurture long-term relationships with key publication influencers.
- ★ Analytical thinker with strong conceptual and research skills.
- ★ Natural leader who displays strong decision-making and attention to detail.
- ★ Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.
- ★ Ability to work independently and as part of a team.

Compensation

The salary will be commensurate with experience and the range will start at \$72,000. BlackStar's benefits package includes but is not limited to medical, dental, and vision coverage, paid time off and public holidays, and reimbursements for home office utilities. The position is headquartered at BlackStar's offices in Philadelphia but will be remote until further notice and pending health and safety measures during the global pandemic.

Timeframe

We seek to have an Executive Editor in place by September 6, 2021.

Applicants should be legally able to work in the United States. While the job can be currently performed from anywhere, candidates will be expected to be available, at a minimum, during EST business hours and available to travel easily to Philadelphia for occasional meetings and gatherings.

How to Apply

Applications should be submitted via email as a single PDF and include a resume, one page cover letter, and writing addendum. Material received by June 30 will be assured full consideration. *Please note that we have an internal candidate under consideration.* All applications will be kept confidential. Send material to jobs@blackstarfest.org with the subject header: "BlackStar – Executive Editor".

Please also include an addendum with answers to at least two (2) and no more than three (3) of the following prompts (each answer should be a single paragraph of no more than 250 words):

- ★ If you could adapt any book or play that has yet to be adapted into a film, what would it be and why?
- ★ If you could re-cast *The Wiz* today, who would you choose to play Dorothy, Scarecrow, Lion, Tin Man, and The Wizard of Oz?
- ★ In your opinion what would most help independent filmmakers of color?
- ★ Required to choose one, which would you say is your favorite Spike Lee film and why?
- ★ Tasked with creating a public conversation between an older established artist and a younger emergent one (of the same discipline), who would you choose and what would you want them to discuss?
- ★ What is your favorite film screened at BlackStar since 2012? Why?
- ★ Which rapper or musician do you most wish would become an actor?

In lieu of the questions above, you may submit a piece of original writing published in the last 18 months. Applications that fail to include the addendum or follow instructions will not be considered.

BlackStar Projects is committed to the principles of equal opportunity employment at every level without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity characteristics or expression, age, non-job related disability, or political affiliation.