

INNOVATION

THE 2022 GENERATION NEXT CLASS IS LOCKED-IN TO ENHANCE THEIR CRAFTS AND ON-SET COMMUNITIES WITH DIFFERENT PATHS AND METHODOLOGIES.

BY MARGOT LESTER

# Innovation

GENERATION NEXT > 2022

What makes someone an innovator? An internal drive to make something better? An external motivation to pursue progression, whatever the field or application? Or perhaps a community like this labor union, made up of the most dedicated, passionate, and, yes, creatively restless people in the world? For the 2022 edition of *Generation NEXT*, ICG freelancer Margot Lester talked to some of the best and brightest new(ish) members of Local 600 who are advancing their jobs and this industry with innovative technologies, creative problem-solving and unexpected improvisation. This year's class takes art and craft to the next level, using old-school gear in new-school ways, adapting and improving legacy systems, and making inroads toward improved representation. Perhaps the best definition of an innovator is simply someone who always sees the glass half-full and brimming with potential for something better.

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# Oren

S O F F E R



"Oren's attention to detail in his lighting is what has impressed me the most," states Director of Photography Quyen Tran, ASC. "He uses contrast ratio, color temperature and quality to bring out the most in not only the faces of the subjects of his images but also the complete environment. Oren does endless research to keep abreast of the technology and is constantly testing lenses and formats to find that special look."

Soffer calls this look "aesthetic naturalism." He describes it as a limited color palette and environment-based lighting. "It's motivated by naturalistic sources and realism but heightened in a way that emphasizes the dynamic interplay between light and shadow to create strong foreground separation, and to bring characters to the forefront of the image," he explains.

Born in Haifa, Israel, Soffer has been a cinephile since childhood. "I started getting really interested in cinematography around high school, shooting music videos and short films on my school's Mini DV camera, but for the longest time had no concept of how I could turn that passion into a career. And growing up in Israel felt especially far away from Hollywood."

Soffer attended NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where he earned nominations for the ASC Gordon Willis Student Heritage Award and the Arri Volker Bahnemann Award for Cinematography. Since then, he's shot hundreds of commercials and music videos for clients that include Nike, BMW, HBO, Doritos, Marriott Hotels, ACE Hardware and Universal Studios. He's also lensed award-winning shorts, including *Opera of Cruelty*, which earned top honors in the Alternative category at the Student Academy Awards in 2018, and *See You Soon*, which won the Audience Award at the Palm Springs International Shorts Festival, premiered on Short of the Week, and was a Vimeo Staff Pick in 2020. His most recent project is *True Love*, which he co-DP'd with Greig Fraser, ASC, ACS.

"I've been most proud to be able to tell LGBT+ stories on screen, especially in my collaborations with director Tyler Rabinowitz on the short films *See You Soon* and *Catalina*," shares Soffer, an outspoken advocate. "Especially being a queer, Jewish person myself, while our own country has recently seen a rapid rise in both anti-LGBTQ+

sentiment and antisemitism, I feel a responsibility to speak up and be active on these issues, and to encourage others to do the same."

That's why Tran says Soffer is a person of principle. "Oren chooses stories that have messages, and – true to his vision and artistic integrity – he won't take on a project unless it speaks to him," she explains. "He has to connect with the material in a personal way, so as to bring justice to the telling of that particular story. He is a good human being and takes time to stay a part of not just the film community but other groups who are underrepresented."

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
PRODUCTION CITY: LOS ANGELES  
ICG MEMBER FOR 1 YEAR  
PORTRAIT BY TOBIN YELLAND