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THE MISSFITS

A Film by Ellie Wen

21 mins / USA / 2019

CLEVELAND
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
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PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL
**SHORT
FEST**
2020

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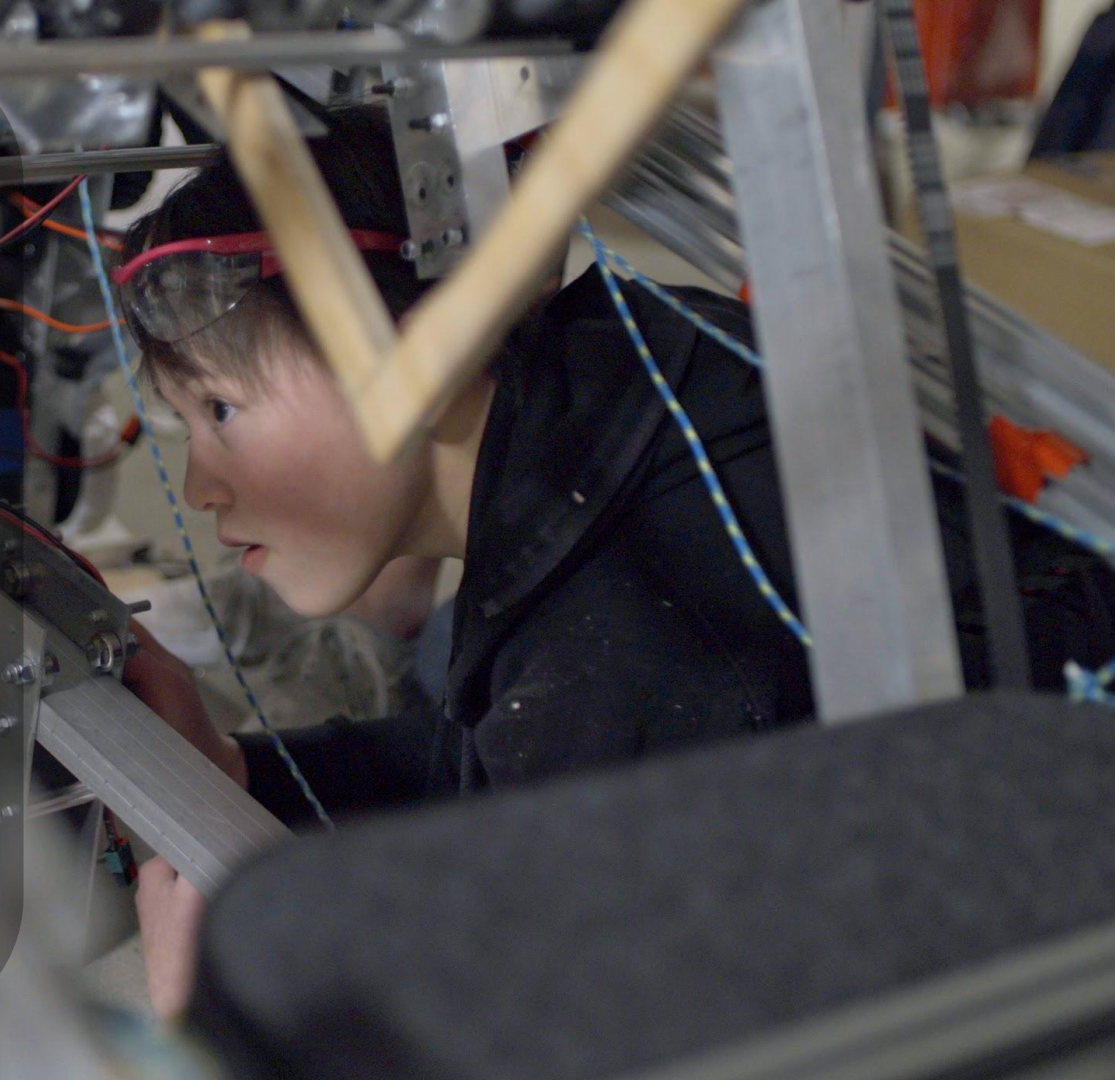


LOGLINE

An all-girls robotics team competes to smash stereotypes and prove themselves in a male-dominated field, while also trying to get through high school.

SYNOPSIS

The Missfits follows an all-girls robotics team based in San Francisco that is taking on the male-dominated field of engineering. They are determined to show other girls how fun and rewarding STEM can be, one robot at a time. The documentary follows The Missfits as they confront growing pains, build their robot, and travel to competitions. The diverse team is made up of twenty girls from high schools around the Bay Area ranging in age from fifteen to eighteen and coming from a variety of backgrounds. On their own, they are outsiders, misfits. But together, on the team, they build each other up and learn to embrace their own identities.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I met the Missfits robotics team when I saw them giving a demonstration at Maker Faire, a 3-day convention that celebrates invention, creativity, and hands-on learning. The girls were speaking to a group of curious kids and I watched in admiration as they confidently demonstrated how their robot worked. I was instantly hooked, just like the kids, and knew I had to make a film about this team and its charismatic, inspiring members.

Growing up as an Asian American female, I never imagined myself as a director. I had never seen anyone who looked like me in the role, so I subconsciously decided that that wasn't a viable path for me. It wasn't until I entered the Stanford MFA program in Documentary Film that I fully embraced my potential as a filmmaker who had my own stories to tell and my own voice to cultivate.

Representation matters. Throughout my career, these two words have been my guiding light. In all of my work, I represent subjects from diverse backgrounds and tackle broader social issues through a very specific lens. I strive to tell personal, human stories because I believe that it is truly in the specific that you find the universal. My goal is to have my films motivate a lasting dialogue that extends beyond the viewing experience. It is about connecting people and fostering understanding.

With "The Missfits," my intention is to tell the story of how adolescent girls - through their actions and choices - can redefine gender and race expectations for STEM. I address this larger theme while focusing on the personal experiences of the girls and what they are going through on a more intimate level. The robotics season is the centerpiece of the film, providing its narrative through-line. However, the heart of the film depicts what it is like to be an adolescent girl juggling familial, social, and academic expectations in today's world.

DIRECTOR BIO

Ellie Wen is an award-winning filmmaker from Hong Kong and Los Angeles. She began her career in Los Angeles where she produced independent films and worked at CAA, CBS Films, and Super-Deluxe. Ellie is an alumna of Film Independent's Project Involve fellowship program.

Her first short documentary "Single Mother Only Daughter" premiered on Short of the Week and is a Vimeo Staff Pick. Her short documentary series "Doing Good Business" was acquired by Participant Media's SoulPancake.

Ellie recently received her MFA in Documentary Film from Stanford University where she produced four short documentary films. "Share," has screened at DOC NYC, Frameline, Big Sky, DOK Leipzig, Outfest, CAAMFest, and was released on The Guardian. For her film "On Mother's Day," Ellie was named Best Local Filmmaker at the UN Women Global Voices Film Festival. Her film "25 Hours" was a finalist in the WrapWomen and Starz film contest and was distributed on Starz TV and digital. During her final year in the MFA program, Ellie was awarded the UFVA Carole Fielding Student Grant for her thesis film, "The Missfits."

She now lives in San Francisco and is developing her next documentary as a resident in the SFFILM FilmHouse Residency Program.





FULL CREDITS

Featuring: The Missfits

Director, Producer, DP, Editor: Ellie Wen

Sound Recordist: Inês Pedrosa e Melo

Additional sound recording: Dinesh Das Sabu

Additional camera at SVR competition: Greg Katz

Faculty Advisors: Srdan Keča, Jan Krawitz, Jamie Meltzer

Technical Advisors: Paul Meyers, Mark Urbanek

Original music by: Daniel Walter

Sound Mixer: Dan Olmsted

Colorist: Mark Sterne

Graphic Designer: Samantha Fine



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Title: The Missfits

Year of Production: 2019

Duration: 20 minutes 56 seconds

Country of Production: USA

Genre: Documentary

Aspect Ratio: 16:9

Language: English

Screening Format: DCP, ProRes



CONTACT

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