



ALPHA KINGS

A film by Faye Tsakas & Enrique Pedráza-Botero
15' | U.S.A | 2022



WORLD PREMIERE

International Film Festival Rotterdam ([IFFR](#))
January 29th, 2023

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Distributor

The New Yorker Documentary

SELECTED SCREENINGS

True/False Film Festival
Camden International Film Festival
Palm Springs ShortFest
Rooftop Film Series
Athens International Film and Video Festival
IndieLisboa International Film Festival
DC/DOX
Winnipeg Underground Film Festival
Tabor Film Festival
SYNCRO Buenos Aires
New/Next Festival
Chicago Underground Film Festival
Rockaway Film Festival
Nashville Film Festival
Denver Film Festival
AFI Fest
*Venice Film Week (**Best Documentary Short**)
*Kurzfilm Festival Hamburg (**Best Short Film**)

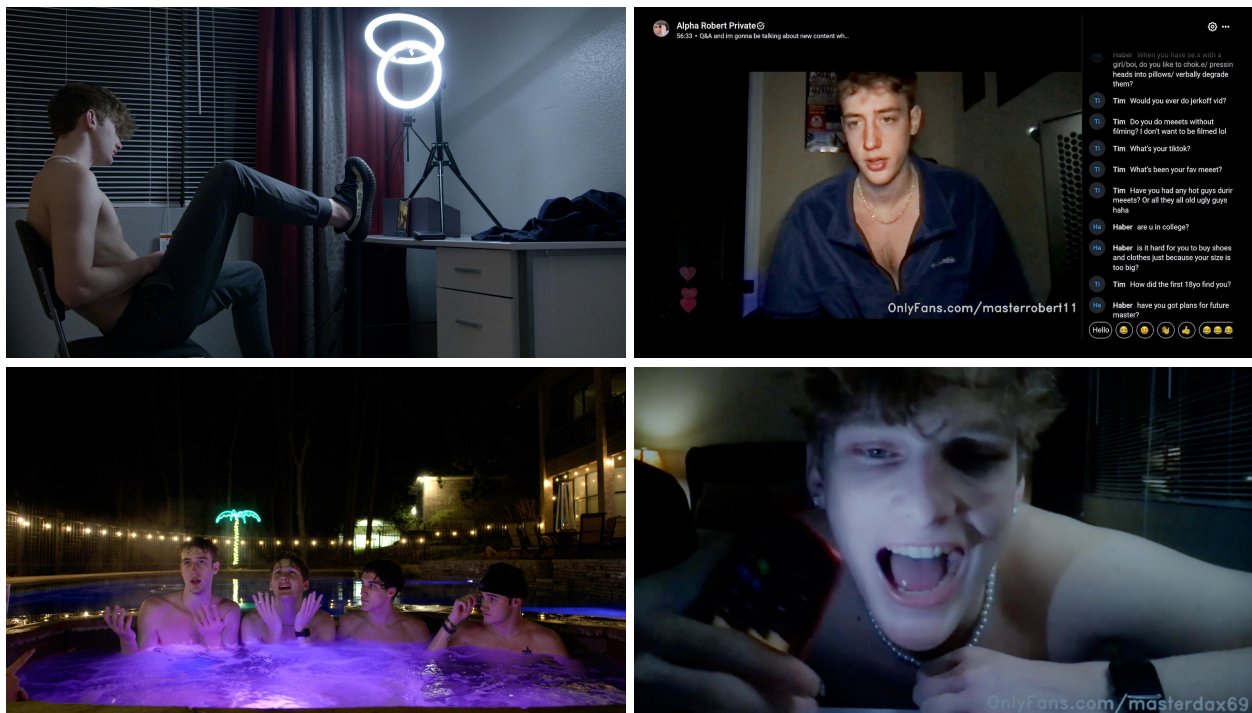
LOGLINE:

From a rented mansion in suburban Texas, a group of young men sell a hyperbolic, alpha-male version of themselves on the internet.

SYNOPSIS:

A group of young men in Montgomery, Texas forgo college to support themselves as “Masters” in the world of online Financial Domination, where thousands of paying clients consent to relinquishing control over their finances. Through the course of one night, the film alternates between the online world and observational moments, weaving between vignettes of virtual, live-streamed sessions and cam shows in which anonymous participants engage in consensual erotic labor.

Alpha Kings explores the dichotomy between these “Masters” alpha-male online personas and their true private selves, drawing on themes of desire, masculinity, sexuality, power, and performance. In a current social-political climate in which the American Dream seems far-fetched, the film’s subjects grapple with uncertainty about the future, their place in society, and the value of their work.



DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

As queer filmmakers, we're interested in exploring parts of our community that may otherwise go overlooked -- stories that do not typically make it on screen. Alpha Kings is born from an interest in exploring sex work in the digital sphere -- where capitalism intersects with and fuels queer sex work. At a time where the top twenty percent of Americans own eighty percent of the country's wealth, and the country recovers economically and socially from a global pandemic, what does the future hold for generation Z? With student loan debt reaching \$1.6 trillion dollars, and no clear path towards traditional career trajectories, how does an accelerated, hyper-capitalistic digital era impact the next generation? How does the culture of commodified celebrification through social media impact our country's youth?

Through a rigorous research process, we looked at the growing number of profiles on Twitter and OnlyFans aimed at monetizing content through erotic interactions between creators and their followers. We discovered a group of young male "Masters" in the world of online Financial Domination, or "Findom," who have recently come to rely on their internet pseudonym accounts for their livelihood. We found it important to showcase their work from a non-judgmental, open, and exploratory perspective. We felt it was deeply important to present the nuances and complexities of this world beyond just its spectacle. We were intrigued at the idea that men seek to worship other men virtually, based on virile physical traits and a desire for verbal dominance - a highly traditional, almost archaic model of masculinity. Social media influencer culture, fandom, and the democratization of digital currencies on the internet has paved the way for the existence of this niche subculture -- one rooted in an intense desire for a "superior man." While these young men portray a macho and aggressive public persona, we were quite interested in exploring their more vulnerable, private selves -- being mindful that they are exploring their own identities at this critical age and juncture in their lives.

In a society consumed by self-documentation and driven by capitalist thinking, wealth and power seem to be paramount to our online identities. Within this context, reaching sexual ecstasy by throwing it all away exists as the ultimate dystopian fetish. Through an observational approach and a focus on stillness, the film embraces internet aesthetics and constructs an idiosyncratic visual language, presenting a privileged look at this line of work while provoking questions about the psychology at play.



DIRECTOR(S):



Enrique Pedr za-Botero

Enrique is a visual artist, filmmaker and media executive from Bogot , Colombia with over ten years of experience working in the entertainment industry and the nonprofit sector. He was recently appointed to co-lead the Documentary Film Initiative at the Shorenstein Center at Harvard Kennedy School, working to examine issues facing the documentary film practice and the intersection of media, policy and the public sphere.

He served as Manager of Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program for five years, running creative labs (Edit and Story Lab, Music and Sound Design Lab, Art of Editing Lab) and international programs in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, as well as contributing to awarding \$1-2 million/year in unrestricted grants to documentary filmmakers globally. He was Director of Programming for Ambulante Documentary Film Festival in its California edition, and has worked with other arts organizations such as Film Independent. Throughout his career, Enrique has served as consultant and Juror in numerous selection committees for nonprofit institutions and media funds in the U.S. and Latin America, including Sundance's Documentary Fund, Proimágenes Colombia, IMCINE Mexico, John Hopkins' Saul Zaentz Innovation Fund, Concordia's Fellowship Program, Brown Girls Doc Mafia and Points North Institute. Enrique holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film & Television from the New York Film Academy and a Master of Fine Arts in Documentary Film & Video from Stanford University.

His latest film, *Alpha Kings*, premiered at International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) in 2023 and has traveled to more than thirty film festivals worldwide. It was acquired for distribution by The New Yorker and will be released publicly in the fall of this year.



Faye Tsakas

Faye is a Greek-American filmmaker from New York City. Her creative non-fiction work documents strains of contemporary American culture in the context of late-stage capitalism, looking at youth culture, excess, disparity and absurdity -- shifting away from the patriarchal gaze. She was named one of Filmmaker Magazine's [25 New Faces of Independent Cinema](#) in 2023. Her films have screened at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, AFI Fest, True/False Film Festival, Camden Film Festival, Rooftop Films, Maryland Film Festival, and Museum of the Moving Image, among others. Her work has been distributed and featured by The New Yorker, Vimeo Staff Picks, Paper Magazine, and Nowness.

Faye is currently a Features Programmer at Big Sky Documentary Film Festival, and she previously served as VP Production for Los Angeles based Passage Pictures, where she oversaw development for the company alongside its CEO. She was Director of Acquisitions & Production for independent Film & Television distribution company FilmRise, where she sought to bring new and unique voices to the forefront; she championed the release of award-winning documentary and narrative films, including Sundance Grand Jury Prize winner *The Miseducation of Cameron Post*. Faye has served on multiple juries and industry panels, including the jury of the Bushwick Film Festival in 2019 -- she participated as an executive decision-maker in the IFP Project Forum, the Hot Docs Project Forum, and the Sheffield DocFest project MeetMarket for several consecutive years. She received her BA in American Studies from Cornell University and her MFA in Documentary Film & Video at Stanford University

CREDITS

Directed, Photographed & Edited by
Enrique Pedráza-Botero, Faye Tsakas

Featuring

Master Dax
Master Hercules
Master Robert
King Jess
Jolie Daspit
Skylar Breann

Consulting Producer

Stefan Weinberger

Production Assistant

Jolie Daspit

Technical Support

Srdan Keca
Frank Floyd

Sound Mix

Dan Olmsted

Color Grading

Robert Arnold

Post Sound Assistance

Sruti Visweswaran

Faculty Advisor

Jamie Meltzer

Thanks

Rowan Ings
Lauren Howell
Susana Barrón
Riel Roch Decter
Robert Greene
Gabby Green
Nora DeLigter
R.J. Lozada
Christopher Nguyen
Joel Rakowski
Maya Daisy Hawke

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