



U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE



Global Media Makers at Università Roma Tre in Rome

In partnership with the U.S. Embassy Rome, Film Independent will present a Global Media Makers program at Università Roma Tre in Rome, consisting of two masterclasses, presented by U.S. film and television industry leaders Alix Madigan and Wendy Calhoun.

Innovation and Vertical Storytelling with Wendy Calhoun

Inside the Multi-Billion Dollar Vertical Microdrama Boom: How Made for Smartphone Storytelling is Transforming Global Entertainment. A creator discussion exploring the innovation, business models, story structure, production strategies, and emerging opportunities in vertical storytelling.

American Independent Film Overview with Alix Madigan

A broad overview of the media landscape in the U.S. to include current best practices in financing, producing, selling and distributing independent films, at a domestic and international level. The session will provide an understanding of who the major players are, their roles in the business and how they are interconnected.

Alix Madigan is an award-winning producer known for films such as *Winter's Bone*, *Hold Your Breath*, *Horsegirls*, *The Lie*, *1982*, and *Sunday*. Her work has earned recognition at major festivals and awards, including the Grand Jury Prize and Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at Sundance, Academy Award nominations including Best Picture, the Gotham Award for Best Picture, and two Independent Spirit Awards. *1982* was Lebanon's official Oscar entry for Best International Feature. Alix serves on the boards of Film Independent and the Hood Museum of Art and is a member of AMPAS and Producers United.

Wendy Calhoun is a Peabody-award-winning writer and producer. Her unique career spans one-hour dramas, unscripted series, VR, and gaming. Calhoun has sold over a dozen television pitches with bold leading roles for women and people of color. She is currently developing new series with Korea's CJ ENM, Universal UK, and Realm. Her scripted drama credits include writing and producing the historic blockbuster first season of Fox's *Empire* and debut seasons of *The Rookie Feds*, *Prodigal Son*, *Station 19*, *Nashville*, *Revenge*, and *Justified*. She's a frequent guest speaker for the National Academy of Sciences, Coverfly, Film Independent, and the Austin Film Festival. Calhoun is an honored alumnus of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and serves on the Board of Directors for the Geena Davis Institute.

Global Media Makers program is an innovative film exchange program designed to create connections between leading American filmmakers and industry professionals with international filmmakers from different regions of the world, including Italy.

Date:

Monday January 26, 2026

Time:

11:30 - 13:00