



F “Jeff’s collection has something for everyone with stuff from every decade,” said fellow filmmaker Cheri Gaulke. “Visiting the museum is an intergenerational trip down memory lane. Grandmas, moms (and dads), teens, and little kids all find something that makes them say, ‘Wow!’ These moments of recognition illicit memories and open up conversations. Jeff chimes in with anecdotes that bring the collection alive. Cheryl and I both have backgrounds in the visual arts and were attracted to the fun visuals – the pinks and turquoise, the quirky shapes, and the graphics and packaging design. We knew lots of people would gravitate to Jeff and his collection, but our real motivation was to give a glimpse into his family life.”

While the business is threatened by its forced closure imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, Bookout and Gaulke shine a sheer lens onto Hafler’s life story, which is as visceral as it is triumphant. First, as an unassuming flamboyant boy at the schoolyard sitting beneath the jungle gym with Barbie and Ken in tow. Years later, that doll with bleach-blond hair down her back would become symbolic of Hafler’s success as a Hollywood hairdresser.

Years after establishing himself in his career, he’d start a family raising a football player son who eschewed any school bullies despite his upbringing by gay parents. “Inclusivity and giving voice to underrepresented communities has always been important to me,” said Bookout. “These things inform my personal art and my career in the nonprofit world as the founder of The Chimaera Project, a nonprofit organization that champions



women and nonbinary filmmakers. *Inside the Beauty Bubble* follows Jeff at a time of COVID lockdowns, protests and massive societal change and we witness Jeff navigating life’s challenges with integrity, optimism and creativity.”

“As a lesbian and a mother of twins, I know how important it is to make a safe world for our families,” said Gaulke. “Representation is key. Our film brings viewers into the delightful world that Jeff has created – his

business, community and loving family. It helps audiences that might not know gay people, see that we are similar to other families – we love our kids and want them to be their best selves whatever that might be.”

The filmmakers felt an intimate portrayal of Halfer’s family dynamic of two fathers, biracial and adoptive was a compelling one as it aligns with modern times. Per a 2018 UCLA study, 114,000 same-sex couples are raising children in the US, according to Bookout. It’s this unconventional family dynamic challenged by unforeseen circumstances that helped the Halfers endure. Punctuated, of course, by that fresh-out-of-the-salon-chair vibe that people all too often rely on to maintain their sense of self-love, whatever life throws at them.

“For me, the target audience was not primarily beauty enthusiasts and hair care professionals,” said Bookout. “I agree that this demographic is a target audience, but not the primary. I believe our film is for anyone who has ever passed a roadside attraction and wished they’d stopped to check it out, or they did stop and will never forget the experience.”



## Lianna Albrizio

*Lianna Albrizio is a seasoned journalist and editor passionate about covering all facets of the arts from film to books, music and food. She loves interviewing people and spreading the word about their amazing work for all to enjoy.*

## ABOUT WINTER FILM AWARDS

New York City’s **11th Annual Winter Film Awards International Film Festival** runs February 16-25 2023. Check out a jam-packed lineup of 73 fantastic films in all genres from 21 countries, including shorts, features, Animation, Drama, Comedy, Thriller, Horror, Documentary and Music Video. Hollywood might ignore women and people of color, but Winter Film Awards celebrates everyone!

Winter Film Awards is an all-volunteer, minority and women-owned registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2011 in New York City by a group of filmmakers and enthusiasts. Our mission is to promote diversity, bridge the opportunity divide and provide a platform for under-represented artists and a variety of genres, viewpoints and approaches. We believe that only by seeing others’ stories can we understand each other and only via an open door can the underrepresented artist enter the room.

Winter Film Awards programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. Promotional support provided by the NYC Mayor’s Office of Media & Entertainment.

For more information about the Festival, please visit [winterfilmawards.com](http://winterfilmawards.com)

◆ Cheri Gaulke, Cheryl Bookout, Films Made by Women, Inside the Beauty Bubble, International Film Festival, Jeff Hafler, Lianna Albrizio.

■ Bookmark.