

NIA DACOSTA |
DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER

ABOUT NIA

NIA DACOSTA IS AN AMERICAN DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER. SHE IS CREDITED AS THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN WOMAN TO HAVE A FILM DEBUT (CANDYMAN) AT NUMBER ONE UPON OPENING WEEKEND.

IN AUGUST 2020, DACOSTA WAS HIRED TO DIRECT THE MARVELS, BECOMING THE YOUNGEST FILMMAKER TO DIRECT A MARVEL FILM.

ORIGINALLY FROM BROOKLYN, THE RISING TALENT ALREADY HAS ONE FEATURE FILM UNDER HER BELT, 2018'S *LITTLE WOODS*.

LITTLE WOODS WAS AN EXEMPLARY EXAMPLE OF DACOSTA'S WILLINGNESS TO TELL A COMPLICATED STORY ABOUT WOMEN. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH JEZEBEL SHE SPOKE IN DETAIL ABOUT THE UNIQUE SPACE SHE TAKES UP AS A BLACK FEMALE FILMMAKER. "I THINK THERE ARE A LOT OF NARRATIVES THAT GET IMPOSED ON FEMALE FILMMAKERS AND ALSO FILMMAKERS OF COLOR," SHE EXPRESSED. "I KNOW THAT I PERSONALLY GET ASKED 'OH DO YOU WANT TO READ THIS SCRIPT ABOUT THIS BLACK PERSON OR THIS SCRIPT ABOUT [THE] OPPRESSION OF BLACK PEOPLE?'" SHE GOES ON TO SAY THAT RATHER THAN IT FEELING LIKE A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD, IT FEELS LIKE A TWO-SIDED COIN TO BE A BLACK FILMMAKER.

[HTTP://WWW.NIADACOSTA.COM/](http://www.niadacosta.com/)

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DR. KIZZMEKIA CORBETT |
HELPED DESIGN THE MODERNA VACCINE

ABOUT DR KIZZMEKIA

KIZZMEKIA CORBETT, AN IMMUNOLOGIST AT THE US NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH), IS ONE OF THE SCIENTISTS WHO IN EARLY 2020 HELPED TO DEVELOP AN MRNA-BASED VACCINE FOR COVID-19. DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH BIOTECH FIRM MODERNA OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, THE VACCINE IS NOW BEING DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE. AND CORBETT IS TAKING ON ANOTHER CHALLENGE: TEMPERING VACCINE HESITANCY BY TALKING ABOUT COVID-19 SCIENCE IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOUR.

ADDITIONALLY, CORBETT SPENT SEVERAL YEARS WORKING ON A UNIVERSAL INFLUENZA VACCINE, WHICH IS SLATED FOR PHASE 1 CLINICAL TRIAL. IN ALL, SHE HAS 15 YEARS OF EXPERTISE STUDYING DENGUE VIRUS, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS, INFLUENZA VIRUS AND CORONAVIRUSES. ALONG WITH HER RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, CORBETT IS AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE NIH FELLOWS COMMITTEE AND AVID ADVOCATOR OF STEM EDUCATION AND VACCINE AWARENESS IN THE COMMUNITY. COMBINING HER RESEARCH GOALS WITH HER KNACK FOR MENTORING, CORBETT AIMS TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.

[HTTPS://WWW.HSPH.HARVARD.EDU/PROFILE/KIZZMEKIA-S-CORBETT/](https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/profile/kizzmekia-s-corbett/)

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DARIO CALMESE |
PHOTOGRAPHER

ABOUT DARIO CALMESE

SITTING AT THE NEXUS OF ART, FASHION AND ACADEMIA, DARIO IS AN ARTIST, URBANIST, DIRECTOR AND BRAND CONSULTANT CURRENTLY BASED IN NEW YORK CITY. HE RECEIVED HIS MASTER'S IN PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS AND HIS BACHELORS IN PSYCHOLOGY AT ROCKHURST UNIVERSITY IN KANSAS CITY. CLASSICALLY TRAINED IN THE PERFORMING ARTS, HE USES HIS KNOWLEDGE OF MOVEMENT, GESTURE, AND PSYCHOLOGY TO CREATE COMPLEX CHARACTERS AND NARRATIVES THAT EXPLORE HISTORY, RACE, CLASS, AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN.

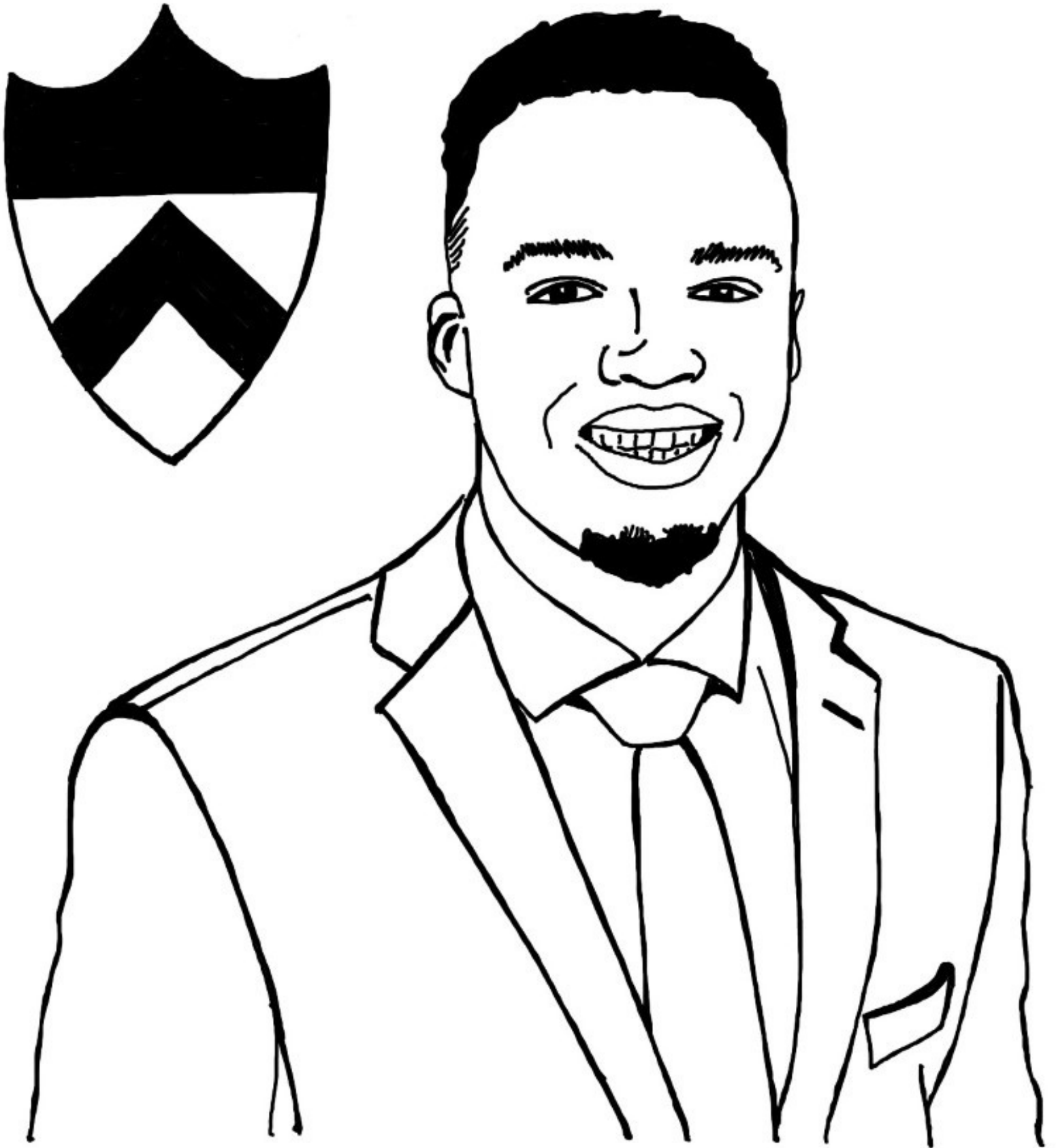
IN 2020 HE MADE HISTORY AS THE FIRST BLACK PHOTOGRAPHER TO SHOOT A COVER FOR VANITY FAIR IN IT'S 106-YEAR HISTORY WITH HIS PORTRAIT OF OSCAR-WINNING ACTRESS, VIOLA DAVIS.

2020 ALSO SAW THE LAUNCH OF HIS WIDELY-ACCLAIMED PODCAST, THE INSTITUTE OF BLACK IMAGINATION, FEATURING CONVERSATIONS FROM THE POOL OF BLACK GENIUS THROUGH THE LENS OF DESIGN.

DARIO SERVES ON THE GLOBAL ADVISORY BOARD FOR ESTEE LAUDER COMPANIES AND IS A PROFESSOR AT THE NEW SCHOOL'S PARSON'S SCHOOL OF DESIGN IN NEW YORK CITY. HE IS CURRENTLY A NYC URBAN DESIGN FORUM FELLOW AND HIS SHOW DIRECTION FOR THE FASHION BRAND PYER MOSS HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY HAILED IN VOGUE AND THE NEW YORK TIMES AS THE "BEST SHOW OF FASHION MONTH."

FOR MORE THAN 15 YEARS, DARIO PERFORMED ON STAGES BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, INCLUDING A SHORT STINT ON THE SOAP OPERA, ALL MY CHILDREN. HIS ARTISTIC WORKS HAVE BEEN SHOWN AT JACK SHAINMAN AND APERTURE GALLERIES IN NEW YORK, THE CHARLES H. WRIGHT MUSEUM IN DETROIT, THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TURKMENISTAN (ARTIST AMBASSADOR FOR THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT), AND ARE A PART OF THE JP MORGAN CHASE COLLECTION. HIS PERFORMANCE ARTWORKS HAVE BEEN SHOWN AT THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ART AND SYMPHONY SPACE AND FRIDMAN GALLERY IN NEW YORK CITY. HIS CURATORIAL DEBUT, FASHIONING THE BLACK BODY (2019), INTERROGATED THE WAYS IN WHICH BLACK ARTISTS LIKE KEHINDE WILEY, MICKALENE THOMAS, JACOLBY SATTERWHITE, AND HANK WILLIS THOMAS ENGAGED WITH THE FASHION OBJECT IN THEIR WORK.

[HTTP://WWW.DARIOCALMESE.COM/ABOUT](http://www.dariocalmese.com/about)



NICHOLAS JOHNSON |
PRINCETON'S FIRST BLACK VALEDICTORIAN

ABOUT NICHOLAS

NICHOLAS ANDRÉ G. JOHNSON HAS ENGAGED IN OPTIMIZATION AND MACHINE LEARNING RESEARCH AT MIT, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, OXFORD UNIVERSITY AND THE MONTREAL INSTITUTE OF LEARNING ALGORITHMS. HE IS CURRENTLY A PHD STUDENT IN OPERATIONS RESEARCH, THE STUDY OF HOW TO MAKE GOOD DECISIONS WITH LIMITED INFORMATION IN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENTS, AT MIT WHERE HE IS WORKING TOWARDS DEVELOPING A MORE UNIFIED THEORY OF OPTIMIZATION AND MACHINE LEARNING.

NICHOLAS HOLDS AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE WITH HIGHEST HONOURS IN OPERATIONS RESEARCH AND FINANCIAL ENGINEERING WITH MINORS IN COMPUTER SCIENCE, STATISTICS AND MACHINE LEARNING, AND APPLIED AND COMPUTATIONAL MATHEMATICS FROM PRINCETON UNIVERSITY. HE WAS THE VALEDICTORIAN OF PRINCETON'S CLASS OF 2020 AND IS THE FIRST BLACK VALEDICTORIAN IN THE UNIVERSITY'S 274 YEAR HISTORY. HIS UNDERGRADUATE THESIS FOCUSED ON DEVELOPING HIGH PERFORMANCE, EFFICIENT ALGORITHMS TO SOLVE A NETWORK BASED OPTIMIZATION PROBLEM THAT MODELS A COMMUNITY BASED PREVENTATIVE HEALTH INTERVENTION DESIGNED TO CURB THE PREVALENCE OF OBESITY IN CANADA.

[HTTPS://WWW.NICHOLASAGJOHNSON.COM/#:~:TEXT=NICHOLAS%20ANDR%C3%A9%20G.,MONTREAL%20INSTITUTE%20OF%20LEARNING%20ALGORITHMS.&TEXT=HE%20WAS%20THE%20VALEDICTORIAN%20OF,THE%20UNIVERSITY'S%20274%20YEAR%20HISTORY.](https://www.nicholasagjohnson.com/#:~:text=NICHOLAS%20ANDR%C3%A9%20G.,MONTREAL%20INSTITUTE%20OF%20LEARNING%20ALGORITHMS.&text=HE%20WAS%20THE%20VALEDICTORIAN%20OF,THE%20UNIVERSITY'S%20274%20YEAR%20HISTORY.)

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MAUREE TURNER |
OKLAHOMA STATE REP 88TH HOUSE

ABOUT MAUREE

MAUREE NIVEK RAJAH SALIMA TURNER (THEY / THEM/ THEIRS / REPRESENTATIVE) IS THE NEWLY-ELECTED STATE REPRESENTATIVE FOR OKLAHOMA'S 88TH HOUSE DISTRICT THANKS TO THE PEOPLE.

REP. TURNER WAS FORMERLY THE REGIONAL FIELD DIRECTOR FOR THE CAMPAIGN FOR SMART JUSTICE, AN ACLU CAMPAIGN FOCUSING ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, AND ITS MANY INTERSECTIONS. THEIR LIFE'S WORKS ARE GEARED TOWARDS FIGHTING FOR AND MAINTAINING THE CIVIL RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF ALL WHO ENTER AMERICA.

THEY ARE AN OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY ORGANIZER, BORN AND RAISED, COMING FROM A MUSLIM AND BAPTIST UPBRINGING. IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, IF THEY WERE MISSING CLASS IT WAS BECAUSE THEY WERE AT AN HIV AND AIDS AWARENESS EVENT OR LGBTQ+ ADVOCACY EVENT WITH THEIR MOTHER.

REP. TURNER GREW UP BELIEVING IN THE POWER AND DUTY THEY HAD TO CHANGE THE WORLD FOR THE BETTER.

THEY HAVE ALSO WORKED WITH THE NAACP OF OKLAHOMA, FREEDOM OKLAHOMA, CAIR OK, AND A NUMBER OF COMMUNITY-BASED AND STUDENT LEAD GROUPS WORKING IN AND RESEARCHING THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACIAL JUSTICE, LGBTQ+ RIGHTS, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS - JUST TO NAME A FEW. WORKING WITH THESE ORGANIZATIONS, THEY HAVE RESEARCHED THE HISTORY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND WHAT IT DOES TO COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, AND BLACK WOMEN ESPECIALLY, AND THEY ARE JUST GETTING STARTED.

[HTTPS://WWW.MAUREETURNER.COM/](https://www.maureeturner.com/)

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