There is nothing left of the American dream on the Nine—a solemn destination, a resting place for those who have relinquished the dream. Modesto is a city that lies in California’s Central Valley, a region devastated during America’s Great Depression. Modesto’s notorious South Ninth Street—the Nine—is a no man’s land where the rules of polite society do not apply. The people living along the Nine form a ravaged micro community whose Darwinian existence is a day to day hustle, and survival is by any means necessary. Kiki, however, is the rare bright light whose magnetic optimism is a means of self-preservation. Her childlike enthusiasm belies the stark reality that surrounds her. THE NINE, filmed in an elegiac style, honors the casualties of a broken system—people who might otherwise be forgotten. Like a Townes Van Zandt song, THE NINE is a film about the beauty of those who fall by the wayside, a bittersweet country ballad that feels at times like a lost page by John Steinbeck or William Faulkner.

I heard people say out here on the street we’re free. I think the street is more like prison. KIKI
FEATURING

KIKI

ROBERT

TONY
This is the land of the fallen, the unloved. God tried to warn me so many times, but I kept walking right into the fire. KIKI
LONG SYNOPSIS

In her first feature-length film, artist Katy Grannan depicts the hustling desperation of a small community living the antithesis of the American Dream on Modesto's South Ninth Street (nicknamed “The Nine”). Borrowing from both Cinéma Vérité and fictional forms, THE NINE is a rare view into a very real and brutal world where prostitution and addiction are the norm. Yet, told through the child-like voice of “Kiki” the film’s narrator and main character, this reality recedes into themes of fantasy, escape and the possibility that tomorrow will be better. THE NINE is not a film about prostitution, poverty or addiction; instead it is a quiet and lyrical portrait of an isolated and forgotten community that yearns to be seen and heard, and ultimately, to be remembered.

The film takes place in Modesto, one of the many off-ramps dotting the sprawling, barren highway that runs down the spine of California's Central Valley. Joan Didion once described Highway 99 as “the trail of an intention gone haywire”—a road that “would never get a tourist to the California he came to see.” Through Grannan’s lens, the town and the street, “The Nine”, becomes a kind of Neverland in which people live in a constant state of arrested childhood. Unwilling to face the pain and responsibility of straight life, the characters in the film behave as children, reveling in the bliss of their perceived but unreal freedom. However, unlike Neverland, these characters do grow old. They cannot escape the terrible consequences of their actions, and rarely find the love they so desperately seek.

This is the world of THE NINE.

At the center of THE NINE is Kiki. Grannan’s deepening friendship with Kiki, and Kiki’s generous spirit and heart-breaking revelations result in an immersive and intimate perspective on her complicated life. We see her exuberance, delusion, and her struggle to escape both her memories and her own skin. As the film unfolds, we realize the extent to which Kiki is attached to the process of making this film, and her dependence on Grannan as her only trusted friend. The film candidly addresses the complicated nature of subject and author, and the responsibility Grannan has to her friend Kiki.

We meet Robert and April, once a suburban family, now homeless and mourning the loss of their child; Inessa, the transgendered, biological father to son, Jorden, now also living the hustle; Tony, the conscience and sage, who’s love of music and singing becomes a temporary respite and source of joy for the entire community; Ginger, a gentle woman who, incapable of leaving her life on “The Nine,” lets everything that matters to her slip away; and Wanda, who constantly speaks of her plans to open a mud wrestling club she'll call “Modesto Down and Dirty.” These are the characters of this world; each unique but also all collectively trapped in a place where the only thing that seems to move is the sun. This cycle of desperation becomes its own normalcy—moments of sadness and humor, hope and regret, love, and ultimately beauty are as much the stuff of this world as they are of our own. The obvious truth revealed by THE NINE is that, perhaps, all any of us really have are our delusions—the stories we tell ourselves.
As much as this is Kiki’s story and her life on The Nine, it’s also a deeply personal story. My first friend in the world—my next door neighbor, my daily playmate and friend from preschool well past high school—was unable to stop a terrible downward spiral and ended up on the street, where she lived for over twenty years. The last time I saw her alive, she was slumped over, walking with a cane and looking about thirty years older than her actual age. She said she felt invisible. She was Jane Doe. After we exchanged details of our adult lives she said to me, “it’s strange how life turns out. I would have thought I would be you and you would be me.”

Every person, particularly every woman rendered invisible and regarded as another Jane Doe, deserves to be seen and heard and ultimately, to be remembered. So this is Kiki’s story but it’s also my friend Heather’s story, and it’s the story of every other person who is part of an invisible America. They resemble anyone else in fundamental ways. They seek connection and love and even when reality is unbearably cruel, they hang onto the possibility that tomorrow might be different. It’s that glimmer of hope, that shift in perspective, that is so remarkable.

I don’t want this to be another story about blight and heroism or blight and pity. It’s more like going into Purgatory and finding something shining, almost holy.
THE CREW

Katy Grannan discovered a passion for photography early in life, after her grandmother gave her a Kodak Instamatic 124. She never aspired to be an artist until she discovered Robert Frank and his indelible photographs in *The Americans*. This work changed her life.

Grannan was first recognized for an intimate series of portraits depicting strangers she met through newspaper advertisements. Since moving to California in 2006, Grannan has explored the relationship between aspiration and delusion—where our shared desire to be of worth confronts the uneasy prospect of anonymity. Together, *Boulevard* and *The Ninety Nine* unfold as a danse macabre of society’s liminal and ignored—the “anonymous”.

THE NINE, Grannan’s first feature film, is an intimate, at times disturbing, view into an America most would rather ignore. Raw, poetic, direct, and unnerving, the film is less a window into a foreign world than a distorted mirror reflecting our own shared existence.

Grannan’s photographs are included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among many others. She’s also a long time contributor to *The New York Times* Magazine, *The New Yorker*, and many other important publications. Grannan received her BA from the University of Pennsylvania and her MFA from the Yale School of Art. There are five monographs of her work: *Model American*, *The Westerns*, *Boulevard*, *The Nine*, and *The Ninety Nine*.

Hannah Hughes has worked alongside Katy Grannan for the duration of THE NINE production. She graduated with a BFA in photography from Bard College in 2011, studying under the likes of Steven Shore, An-My Lê, and Tim Davis. After graduating, she moved to the Bay Area and began work with Katy as her photography assistant, and then immediately joined her to film THE NINE. Hannah often travels with Katy on shoots and was an integral creative partner throughout the making of the film. Though Hannah’s official title on THE NINE is assistant director, she has worked on nearly every aspect of the film, including second camera, assistant editor, associate producer, and post-production supervisor. She is also a photographer in her own right.

Marc Smolowitz is a multi-award-winning director, producer, and executive producer with 20+ years of experience across all aspects of the entertainment and media business. Marc’s career focus has been on powerful social issue filmmaking across all genres. His credits include films that screened at top-tier festivals—including Sundance, Berlinale, AFI Docs, IDFA, Tokyo, Melbourne, among others—and released worldwide theatrically, across all forms of television, and on VOD/Digital. Select titles include: *Heaven Adores You* (Producer, 2014), *The Power Of Two* (Director/Producer, 2011), Academy-Award® nominated *The Weather Underground* (Producer, 2003), and *Trembling Before G-d* (Producer, 2001).

Throughout his career in advertising and brand communications, John McNeil has worked in just about every role afforded a modern creative person. As an agency CCO, creative director, writer, and art director, John has solved strategic brand problems and created multiple award-winning campaigns for clients such as IBM, Kodak, Microsoft, Xbox, HP, Motorola, and American Express, among others. As a photographer, his work has been featured in global ad campaigns for IBM, Microsoft, DuPont, Kodak, and Nortel, and in publications such as *The New York Times Magazine* and *New York Magazine*. Finally, as a Commercial Director, he has created campaigns and films for Microsoft, Nortel, and DuPont, to name a few.
Nils Peyron is an accomplished senior executive with diverse agency management, strategic marketing, and global brand-building experience. He is expert at leading creative teams and producing original content to drive unique brand storytelling. From running McCann-Erickson San Francisco to producing the Academy Award–winning animated film Rango, Nils understands every facet of today’s unbundled communications space. Prior to joining John McNeil Studio in 2014, he was CMO of TOMS Shoes and spent time at Translation, McCann Erickson, Bath & Body Works, Ogilvy NY and Air France. He has also partnered with Gore Verbinski to launch an innovative trans-media production company, Blindwink, specializing in the development and production of original IP in films, videogames, TV shows, and digital.

**Executive Producer**

Stephen Berger has edited award-winning commercials, music videos, and short films, including work that has been recognized by the Cannes Lion, AICP, and D&AD awards. Stephen’s clients include Xbox, Activision, Logitech, among others. Notably, he edited two of the four short films that opened the 2010 Sundance Festival—Spike Jonze’s I’m Here and Logorama. He garnered significant attention for Logorama, which went on to win the Academy Award for Best Animated Short. He has also worked with such directors as David Fincher, Spike Lee, and Joe Carnahan.

**Editor**

Barry Cole is a Grammy-nominated music supervisor who specializes in music supervision, clearance, and managing publishing rights for filmmakers and musicians. His consultation company, Spot Music, has more than 80 film credits, including Sling Blade, American Psycho, Alive Inside, 50 Shades Of Black, and Notorious. Barry was nominated for a Grammy in 2013 in the field of Best Compilation for Visual Media for his work on the documentary Marley. In 2014, he founded multisfalcon.com, the digital music and licensing portal.

**Music Supervisor**

Stephen Emerson is a sought-after composer and jazz-influenced singer/songwriter, Steven has a long history of musical experience and accomplishment. Early in his career, Steven joined the band True West and opened for R.E.M. on national tour. He spent six years in New York City collaborating with up-and-coming acclaimed artists, and won an ASCAP songwriting award for a duo album with cellist Peter Lewy. Steven also wrote and directed Second Person, which was selected for the San Francisco International Film Festival. He has since released several solo albums and composed music for documentaries, online games, television productions, and commercials.

**Composer**

Originally from Green Village, NJ, Gus Koven moved to Los Angeles in the early 1990s, where his interest in electronic music led him to sound design. He has worked on a broad range of projects, ranging from art installations to devices to film sound design. Gus has extensive experience working as a sound designer in branding and advertising, working on campaigns for adidas, Apple, Coke, Dewars, Heineken, Levis, Nike, Old Spice, Samsung, Audi, BMW, Dodge, Fiat, Nissan, Lexus and Mercedes, among many others. His work has garnered D&AD, London International, Clio and AICP awards. He has worked with Daft Punk as a sound designer on their feature film Electroma, as well as on their Grammy award–winning album Random Access Memories. He lives in Santa Monica, CA with his wife, Stephanie, and their three children.

**Sound Designer**

Barry Cole

Stephen Emerson

Gus Koven
Jason Dotts  
*Sound Re-Recording Mixer*

Eli Olson is an Emmy Award-winning film editor. Her extensive experience reaches into narrative features, documentary, non-fiction broadcast, and commercial spots. Eli won an Emmy for her work on *My Flesh and Blood* for HBO Films, which also won the Audience Award and Best Director Prize at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival. In 2014, she co-directed the documentary *Stories from Tohoku* for PBS, which won the Jury Prize at the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival. Her editing credits include *3 Still Standing* (2014), *Heaven Adores You* (2014), *And Then Came Lola* (2009), *American Masters: Sam Cooke Crossing Over* (2008), *Mrs. Menendez* (2008), *The Hunt For The Boston Strangler* (2007), and *Finding Amelia Earhart* (2007), among others.

Pranay Nichani  
*Assistant Editor*

Rivkah Beth Medow is a regional Emmy Award-winning filmmaker who has produced, directed, and managed documentary, television, commercial, and non-profit productions for the past 12 years. Millions have seen her projects on PBS, Food Network, BBC, and in film festivals worldwide. Rivkah has a strong social and environmental focus that can be seen in her credits, including two episodes of PBS Marine Fisheries & Aquaculture Series: *Empty Oceans, Empty Nets and Farming the Seas* (associate producer, 2005); *The Next Frontier: Engineering the Golden Age of Green* (associate producer, 2010), and *We've Got the Power* (Co-Producer, 2013). *Sons of a Gun* (director, producer, 2008), her directorial debut, premiered at South By Southwest and was broadcast on PBS.
Directed and Produced by
KATY GRANNAN

In collaboration with
HANNAH HUGHES

Featuring
ARTIMESE FAIRLEY (KIKI)

Executive Producers
JOHN McNEIL and NILS PEYRON

Producer
MARC SMOLOWITZ

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KATY GRANNAN
with ARTIMESE FAIRLEY (KIKI)

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Composer
STEVEN EMERSON

Music Supervisor
BARRY COLE

Sound Designer and Supervising Sound Editor
GUS KOVEN

Sound Re-Recording Mixer
JASON DOTTS

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Tony
Robert
April
Nana
Sapo
Wanda
Ginger
Lester
Tassie
Inessa
Jorden
Chastity
Auntie

Very special thanks to all of our friends on The Nine

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Katy Grannan and Hannah Hughes

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Hannah Hughes

ADDITIONAL EDITING
Eli Olson

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WITH Patrick Lundberg, Dillon Morris

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Kasey Reed

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Social Media Strategists - Snow Burns, Catherine Nolan
Social Media Coordinator - Dana Elliot
Executive Assistant - Christy Letke
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Gale
Stephen

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Carolina
Popeye
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Audio Technician - Douglas Robertson
Hair, Make-Up and Wardrobe - Erin Gallagher

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In Memoriam
Stephen, Rachel, New York and so many others
who have lost their lives to The Nine

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