

What Malibu Believes

With their popular web docuseries 'I BULieve', husband-and-wife team Jules Williams and Alison Pothier seek to understand how the life experiences of inspirational Malibuites have helped inform their belief systems.

✍️ written by Holly 📷 photographed by Julie Wuellner

In the opening scenes of a recent episode of 'I BULieve', the web miniseries from husband-and-wife duo Jules Williams and Alison Pothier that profiles a new Malibu resident in each installment, the musician Deepak Ramapriyan sits placidly on a beautiful vista above Malibou Lake, the Santa Monica mountains enveloping him in lush afternoon light. It's a beautiful shot, quickly taking on a kinetic drama as Ramapriyan rises and begins to play his violin, his body moving to the music with a virtuosic passion and skill that's hypnotizing. Against this vivid background, it's almost jarring when a sweet, softly-spoken voice begins playing over the music.

"I believe in the intricate and unique architecture of different ragas [a melodic mode in Indian classical music] and their wide-reaching combination of scales," Ramapriyan says. "Music that facilitated different feelings and emotions that were devotional by nature. As a young child, such music was injected into my cells by osmosis."



I BULIEVE Taking its title from Malibu's nickname, 'I BULieve' is the acclaimed new docuseries from Malibu husband-and-wife duo Jules Williams and Alison Pothier

Over the next 7 minutes, Ramapriyan continues to detail in voiceover the things that he truly believes in as we watch him perform. His beliefs range from the esoteric to the simple, from always speaking with intention to the significance of the violin teachers who encouraged Ramapriyan's passions for both Western and Carnatic music traditions, ultimately setting the foundation for his unique compositions today.

Visually and thematically it's an interview unlike any you've seen, before a person's story told through the lens of the subject's deepest beliefs.

"With 'I BULieve', we wanted to show how peoples' lives are often framed by their experiences, and then the beliefs that are borne out of those experiences," said Williams.

The effect is deeply moving, laying bare the beliefs of inspirational Malibuites with a thoughtfulness and transparency that not only instills an uncommon intimacy with each video's subject, but invites viewers to train the same level of self-awareness onto



PARTNERS Pothier and Williams, co-founders of production company 21 Mile Films, married and moved to Malibu in 2015.

their own life. “How we define ourselves so often comes from [the external],” said Pothier. “With ‘I BUlieve’, we wanted to feature self-awareness that turns into self-actualization.”

This has been a major theme throughout much of Williams’ and Pothier’s lives and work. A professional director and filmmaker, Williams first conceived of the idea for a docuseries about the relationship between our life experiences and our beliefs some thirty years ago, in 1992. It was a theme that held particular significance for Pothier, an executive coach, writer and filmmaker whom Williams would meet many years later. The founder of Inside Out Retreats, a health and personal development practice which opened in 2005, Pothier had been helping clients tap into their true belief

systems for years, an important step in her work of helping them achieve success, fulfillment and purpose.

Meeting in the United Kingdom while working on a project together, Williams and Pothier would move to Malibu in 2015, quickly falling in love with their new home. Soon thereafter the two launched production company 21 Mile Films, and in 2016 released their first Malibu-based project, a docuseries entitled ‘Malibu Stories’. Telling the stories of local Malibuites in beautifully-produced, short interviews, the series was immediately well-received.

In 2019 Pothier and Williams released their second web docuseries, building off the success and theme of ‘Malibu Stories’ to create a new, unconventional kind of interview series. With ‘I BUlieve’, which takes its

title from Williams and Pothier’s beloved adopted home, the two filmmakers began to dig even deeper with their subjects.

Featuring Malibuites from Malibu Arts Commission Chair Catherine Malcolm Brickman to the Russian-born visual artist Ann Krasner, ‘I BUlieve’ seeks to investigate how our lives get framed by our experiences and the beliefs that are borne out of those experiences. It’s oftentimes difficult and thoughtful work for ‘I BUlieve’ subjects, albeit ultimately important. There is something about hearing people articulate their deepest beliefs with clarity and conviction that immediately invites the same kind of rumination.

“It’s everyone’s story,” said Pothier.

Stream all current episodes of ‘I BUlieve’ on ibulieve.com.

