

Northwestern University

Department of Radio/Television/Film

Spring + Summer 2021

Alumni News



Nevo Shinaar (MFA Doc '17) serves as co-producer (Mitten Media) on 'White Eye', a nominee for Best Live-Action Short Film at the 93rd Academy Awards. The film, which chronicles the challenges faced by a migrant worker over the course of one night, is part of [WarnerMedia's re-launch of OneFifty hub](#), and is streaming on HBOMax.

Andy Miara (MFA WSS '11) has accepted a tenure-track teaching position at Emerson College as an Assistant Professor in Writing for Film and Television in the school's Department of Visual and Media Arts. He will divide his time between Boston and Los Angeles where he is currently developing an animated comedy for Cartoon Network.



Ian Bertorelli's (MFA Doc '20) film *Sacred Brick Technology* had a Canadian premiere at [Doxa 21's virtual film festival](#). It screened earlier in 2021 at the Big Muddy Film Festival and will screen later this year (in person!) at the [Athens International Film + Video Festival](#).

Isabella Ostos' (MFA Doc '20) film *tres cuartos y un techo* screened at Ivy Film Festival this past March as part of their official selection. The film will also screen at the Southern Cone International Film Festival from May 20-23, 2021.



Milton Guillén's (MFA Doc '20) first feature, *The Maribor Uprisings*, is part of the ['Anarchism on Film'](#) program with the Anthology Film Archives. Also, his first short, *The Presence of the Past*, was programmed by the [Midwest Film Festival](#) in a special Sci-fi program, as well as part of the CODEC Experimental Film Festival in Mexico City.

Naeema Jamilah Torres (MFA Doc '19) is a producer on the upcoming film *Chicago Lawn*, a feature-length documentary currently in production. *Chicago Lawn* is set in the neighborhood of the same name on Chicago's southwest side, focusing on the resilience of the predominantly working-class Latinx and African American neighborhood which was heavily impacted by the pandemic. The film is a co-production with Frontline, Kartemquin Films, and HipTruth Productions and directed by Marco Williams.



Cami Guarda's (MFA Doc '19) thesis short documentary "The Woman and the Sea" was an official selection at the Milwaukee Film Festival's popular The Milwaukee Show, part of the Cream City Cinema program. She was interviewed by Milwaukee's local NBC and



Hasan Demirtas (MFA Doc '17) recently finished his fiction feature film, ["Separation."](#) His feature documentary film, ["You Name It"](#) will be shown at the Kurdish Film Festival in Moscow in July.

NPR stations due to her participation in the festival as a local filmmaker. Cami is a full-time Lecturer at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she teaches Documentary Filmmaking, Video Storytelling and TV News Reporting.



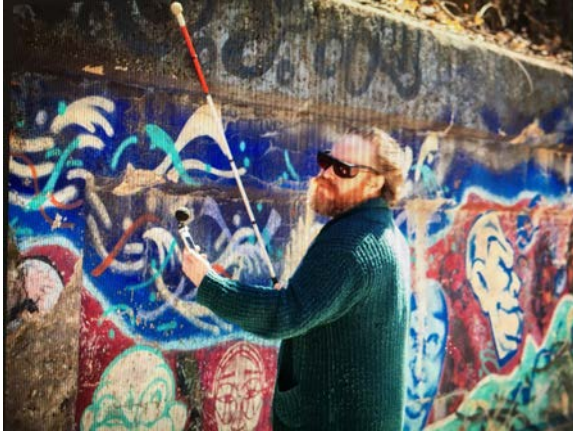
Jessica Scott's (MFA Doc '19) thesis film *The Color of Skin* has been selected to 13 film festivals in the past two years. Her film will premiere in Toronto, Canada for the [International Black & Diversity Film Festival](#) in June, which is nominated for best international short documentary and it will premiere in Hamburg, Germany for the [Golden Sneakers International Hip Hop Film Festival](#) along with her 2017 film, *Sneakers: It's Complicated*. She has also accepted a position as full-time tenure-track Assistant Professor of Media Studies and Digital Newsroom Manager position at Governors State University in University Park, IL. Scott teamed up with director and producer Charla Wilson, Historian and Archivist for the Black Experience at Northwestern University Libraries as editor and cinematographer for "The Absence of Music", a short documentary about a group of Black college students who started a choral group at Northwestern University in the 1970s.

Mina Kim Fitzpatrick's (MFA Doc '17) documentary feature project "Wandervogel" was selected to take part in the [San Sebastián Film Festival's Ikusmira Berriak residency program](#).



Andy Slater (SAI '20) had a piece up at the Museum of Contemporary Art called Limited Reach, as part of a group exhibition through May 2 called ["The Long Dream."](#) He also worked with the SF Bay area-based dance company Kinetic Light on their latest dance film *Descent* to produce a version of the soundtrack for 360-degree audio/video playback, with and without audio description tracks. The work premiered at the Walker Art

Center back in December.

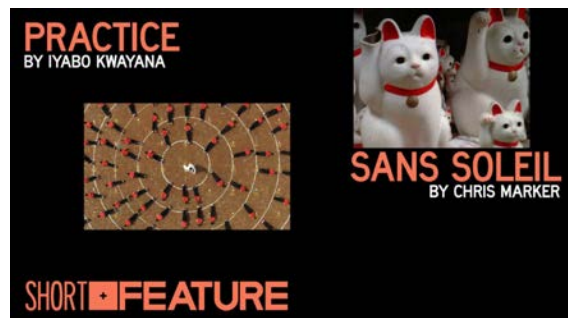


Darvell Jones (SAI '19) has opened his first recording/production studio facility in the Beverly neighborhood in Chicago.



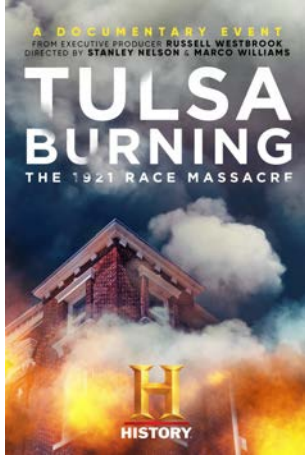
The audio drama *[Unwell: a Midwestern Gothic Mystery](#)*, produced by **Jeffrey Gardner** (SAI '19) and Eleanor Hyde, is a finalist for the BBC Audio Drama Award for Best Podcast or Online Audio Drama.

Practice, a mesmerizing short doc that meditates on the group and the individual during martial arts practice by **Iyabo Kwayana** (Doc '17) will be paired with Chris Marker's famed *Sans Soleil* for the [Criterion Collection's Short + Feature: Faces in the Crowd](#) installment. Slated for release in early July.



Faculty News

Marco Williams is honored to create a film about one of the worst racial incidents in American history. [Tulsa](#)

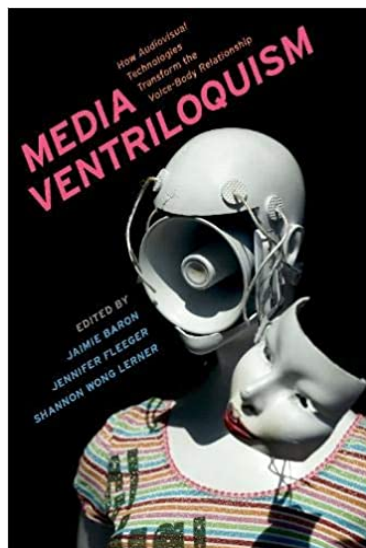


[Burning: The 1921 Race Massacre](#) tells the story of the destruction of the Greenwood section of Tulsa, often referred to as Black Wall Street. The film premiered on the History Channel on May 30, commemorating the 100th anniversary to the massacre.

Kyle Henry received a City of Chicago [DCASE IAP grant](#) for the production of his feature essay documentary *Trace of Time*. The film uses his family's extensive archive to explore his mother's thwarted desire to be a fine artist, questioning the shadowy toxic stew underpinning racial, gender, and economic privilege in the United States, on a journey to the end of personal existence during a global pandemic.



Streaming service [MUBI](#) has announced that it will launch the series [Awakenings: Three by Stephen Cone](#) in June. Films featured include *The Wise Kids*, *Henry Gamble's Birthday Party* and *Princess Cyd*.



Prof. Jacob Smith's chapter "The Mills Brothers, Animators of the



Ariel Stess's play, "I'm Pretty Fucked Up," was performed as a virtual play at

Unseen Stage,” has been published in the book "[Media Ventriloquism](#)" (Oxford University Press).

The Theatre School at DePaul University. The production was directed by Rob Adler. Performances ran February 28th through March 5th, 2021.

Ozge Samanci was selected as 2021-22 [Kaplan Faculty Fellow](#) with her project *Evil Eye* (Graphic Novel). The same project was also selected by [Forecast Program](#) in Berlin among 600 applicants.

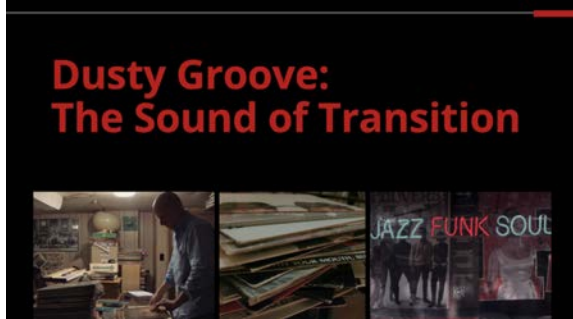


Faculty member **Ines Sommer**'s documentary *Seasons of Change on Henry's Farm* continues its steady festival run with a "Best Feature Documentary" win at the Big Muddy Film Festival and screenings at the American Conservation Film Festival, Sjøn International Anthropological Festival (Denmark), and the San Francisco DocFest.

In June, A Red Orchid Theatre will debut **Brett Neveu**'s piece *American Bottom* as a full-cast enhanced audiobook, directed and sound designed by **Neil Verma**. Telling folk stories and fragments from a unique region of southern Illinois, *American Bottom* uses original field recordings, vivid readings, foley, and original music to illuminate a place bound up in Indigenous histories, ecological precariousness, and complex social histories. *American Bottom* was supported by a Provost's Grant for Research in the Humanities Social Sciences and Arts



Assistant Professor **Danielle Beverly** will [tour](#) her latest feature documentary "*Dusty Groove: The Sound of Transition*" in outdoor community screenings in Summer 2021. The DIY tour was funded by [grants](#) from the Illinois Arts Council and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special



Associate professor **Debra Tolchinsky's** NYT's OP-Doc, *Contaminated Memories*, screened at the 2021 Italian Festival of Criminal Justice (which previously featured Amanda Knox) in Modena, Italy. The screening was followed by a panel discussion that included Penny Beerntsen, Martina Cagossi, Chiara Greco, Frederica Fedorczyk, and Debra Tolchinsky.



Erin Courtney's latest play, "Ann, Fran, and Mary Ann" is published by 53rd State Press. Philadelphia Theater Company was awarded a Project grant from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage to commission and produce Erin Courtney and Max Vernon's musical "The Tattooed Lady."

Neil Verma's piece "[Memorial](#)" won an honorable mention in the Sound of the Year Awards issued by the BBC New Radiophonic Workshop and Museum of Sound. The piece is a recording of 113 sirens from Memorial Day 2020 to the George Floyd protests in Chicago ten days later. Verma was also elected Board Member at Large for the Society for Cinema & Media Studies, the leading organization of scholars who study film, television, and related arts. SCMS represents 3000 members at 500 institutions in 38 countries. He will serve for a three-year term.

Laura Kipnis's new book, *Love in the Time of Contagion: A Diagnosis* will be published in February by Penguin/Random House.

Current Student News

Undergraduates

The 2021 **undergraduate** winners of the **Brad Krevoy Screenwriting Fund Prize** are:

1st Place Prize:

Assimilated, a screenplay by **Kalpita Chakote**

Two 2nd Prizes:

Listen Here, a television pilot by **JT Tsuchiya**
Jesus as a Girl, a television pilot by **Esther Wyatt**

Congratulations to the winners!

Lauren Washington's (RTVF '22) documentary "Samuel Johnson Jr: More Than A Barber" that she directed, produced, edited, and shot in Professor Danielle Beverly's "The One Person Documentary" class was published in the [NURJ's Vol. 4 Multimedia Edition](#). Also, her

documentary will be screening at the Chicago Filmmakers' seventh edition of "[The Spirit of Chicago](#)" virtual showcase.

The Humanities Council of the [Kaplan Humanities Institute](#) awarded **Drew Thomas** (RTVF '21) the 2021 Dolores Kohl Kaplan Project Prize for his podcast *Post-Mortem: Franc Fallico*. Drew created his project for Professor Debra Tolchinsky's *The Crime Centered Documentary*.

Writing for the Screen and Stage

The 2021 **graduate** winners of the **Brad Krevoy Screenwriting Fund Prize** are:

1st Prize:

You Are Not That Lost; a feature film by **Clara Deák-Leon**

Two 2nd Place Prizes:

White Dog Rises; a television pilot by **Gwyneth Forsythe**
Coping; a feature length screenplay by **Hayley Sigmon**

Congratulations to the winners!

Maria Smith (WSS '22) was selected as a playwright for this year's [Theater Masters Take 10 Festival](#). Theater Masters hosts a national 10-minute playwriting competition among the students at the top MFA programs in the country. Out of 60+ submissions, 6-7 winning plays are selected by a reading panel made up of industry professionals. Maria's play, "Every Man's Memorial," will be given a development workshop and professional reading over the course of Spring 2021. This festival has launched the career of many successful alumni, and Maria will be representing NU this year.



MFA Doc Media

The 2021 MFA Doc Media graduating cohort screened nine thesis films as part of the [MFA Doc Media Showcase](#), "Lost/Found" which was presented virtually in partnership with Block Cinema on June 9-10. Films included *Freedom Hill* by **Resita Cox**; *Hello, Noura* by **Noura Al Sabboury Khayat**; *Falling Leaves from the Family Tree* by **Chris Churchill**; *When Beirut Was Beirut* by **Alessandra El Chanti**; *Hejar* by **Anvar Hassanpour**; *The First Wave* by **Marilyn Oliva**; *Bayou for Us* by **Mizani Ball**; *Last Race* by **John Haley**; and *White Lotus* by **Sean Moore**.



John Haley's (MFA Doc Media '21) short film, "Old Met," was selected to screen at the 40th Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival in Minnesota. The film, a short archival documentary, documents the transformation of a plot of land in Bloomington, Minnesota over the decades, evolving from the Minnesota Twins' Metropolitan Baseball Stadium to the current home of the Mall of America. Cycling rapidly through the decades and aided by a layered soundscape, the film documents the

continuously evolving patterns of
construction, loss, and construction again
dictated by American capitalism.

Screen Cultures

Julia Guimaraes (Class of 2023) published a short piece in In Media Res, entitled "["Television of Attractions:" Digital Video Broadcasting, Science Fiction and Uncanny Audiences.](#)" in April 2021.

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The newsletter will return in Fall 2021 - Have a great summer everyone!



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