Spotlight!

Faculty

Lynn Spigel, the Frances Willard Professor of Screen Cultures in the School of Communication Department of Radio/Television/Film, has won the Fellows Book Award from the International Communication Association. “Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America” (University of Chicago Press, 1992) received this recognition bestowed on books that have made a substantial contribution to the scholarship of the communication field as well as the broader rubric of the social sciences and have stood some test of time. “It’s a wonderful honor to win this award,” Spigel said. “Make Room for TV began as my dissertation, so I hope this encourages our graduate students to see the value in their PhD work. Mostly, I’m so happy my book is still meaningful to readers today.” She was additionally honored at the NU Faculty Recognition Dinner held at the president’s house on September 28, 2015 for this event.

In addition to the ICA Book Fellows Award, she received a Fellowship at The Internationale Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung (IKKM) at the Bauhaus University over the summer. During the year she has given lectures at The University of Oregon, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Jewish Museum in New York, This is the City Conference at UCLA, and the Conference on Gossip hosted by the University of Chicago English Department. She was the Keynote speaker at UC Irvine, Princeton University and Bauhaus University Summer School Archive Conference in Germany, and the Film History Conference hosted by University of Wisconsin. From April to September she has given lectures at The University of Oregon, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Jewish Museum in New York, This is the City Conference at UCLA, and the Conference on Gossip hosted by the University of Chicago English Department. She was the Keynote speaker at UC Irvine, Princeton University and Bauhaus University Summer School Archive Conference in Germany, and the Film History Conference hosted by University of Wisconsin. From April to September she has given lectures at The University of Oregon, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Jewish Museum in New York, This is the City Conference at UCLA, and the Conference on Gossip hosted by the University of Chicago English Department. She was the Keynote speaker at UC Irvine, Princeton University and Bauhaus University Summer School Archive Conference in Germany, and the Film History Conference hosted by University of Wisconsin. Publications for this year include: “Introduction,” Revolution of the Eye, exhibition catalog, Yale University Press; “TV Spaces,” in Mediated Geographies and Geographies of Media, ed. Susan Maines and Julie Couples, Berlin: Springer; and “Same Bat Time, Different Bat Channels,” with Henry Jenkins, revised and reprinted in The Many Live of the Batman, Edition, 2. Ed. Roberta Pearson and Willaim Urrichio, London: Routledge.

Screen Cultures PhD

Whitney Pow, Whitney Pow is a third-year Ph.D. student in Northwestern University’s Screen Cultures program, where she studies the way queerness, emotions, gender, race and systems of control and power manifest in video games, particularly those made by queer and trans people. She is a video game designer and research fellow at the University of Chicago’s Game Changer Chicago Design Lab, where she is designing a video game called The Doctor Will See You Now, which is about feelings of discomfort or vulnerability for LGBTQ individuals, women and people of color in institutional spaces like the doctor’s office. The Doctor Will See You Now was exhibited at the Different Games Conference at New York University and presented on a panel featuring Chicago-based video game designers at the Adler Planetarium’s Adler After Dark series.

Whitney presented her academic work on Google Maps and grief at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual conference. On September 25, she presented the paper “I’m sure your woman-arms will be able to lift it: Queer interface and the legibility of power and privilege in Anna Anthropy’s Realistic Female First-Person Shooter” at the Feeling Games Conference at the Illinois Institute of Technology. The game was showcased in April at the 2015 Different Games Conference at New York. Whitney was also invited to speak on panels about Gamergate, race, gender, video games and social media at the University of Chicago and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Whitney received her MA in Screen Cultures from Northwestern University and holds a BA with concentrations in English Literature, Art History and Film from the University of Michigan.
MFA in Documentary Media

João Queiroga (class of ‘16) is a performer, filmmaker, and an LGBTQ-rights advocate. The arts have been part of João’s identity since he started performing as a young actor in Portugal. At the age of 17, João left his home country and studied in India for two years searching for new adventures. João continued to study abroad in France, New Zealand and China. He is a strong believer in the potential of arts to create actions, advocate ideals and promote human rights. In his first year he curated Queergasm!, an interdisciplinary performance art event, at Center on Halsted; he is currently working on the 2016 edition.

Queiroga and Shuhan Fan directed a short-film, “Skye,” that played at Reeling Film Festival, the second oldest LGBTQ Film Festival in the world September 20. The film also played in AUBG International Film Festival in Bulgaria and in China Women’s Film Festival in Beijing. “Skye” is about a 62-year-old transwoman who moves into the Midwest’s first LGBTQ affordable senior housing (Town Hall Apartments) and seizes the opportunity to relive the dreams of her youth in a place that she calls home for the first time. “Azure Flame,” a documentary Queiroga directed about a transwoman of color and her personal journey from an abusive relationship into finding dignity and love, was included in the first Trans flu·ent·ial Film Festival, a day-long celebration of films that capture the unique and influential journey accompanying the trans experience.

He directed a play written and performed by Roger Q. Mason (MFA Writing for the Screen and Stage, class of ‘16) that explored the fantasy of phone sex as an escape from the realities of internalized homophobia, body image struggles, and germophobia. The play was presented on October 24th in the Alvina Krause Studio in Annie May Swift Hall and was a collaboration between the Department of Performance Studies and the School of Communication.

MFA in Writing for Stage+Screen

“Time Difference” by Lin Tu (class of ‘16) premiered at Aspen’s acclaimed Theater Masters’ ninth annual TAKE TEN: NATIONAL MFA PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL. Her experience with the festival was an incredible journey, opening her the broad, wondrous theatre world. “Theater Masters” led to productions in Aspen and New York with professional directors and actors; panel discussions and local TV interviews; meetings with people from agencies, organizations, and publishing houses; conversations with an acclaimed artistic director and actress among seven other talented playwrights; and a publication of the collection of the festival’s short plays.

Currently, Tu is working on two full-length screenplays and will have a staged reading with MasterClash on another ten-minute play of hers. She is also on a screenplay adaptation contact with a respected Chinese film director, and is excitedly looking forward to the collaboration!

RTF Undergraduate

Grace Hahn (class of ‘16) is an RTF Senior. She has worked for the RTVF department office for 4 years. In addition to majoring in Radio/TV/Film, Hahn is pursuing minors in French and History at Northwestern. She enjoys playing the guitar and is an advocate for clean eating and sustainable environmental efforts. She is currently working on establishing Count the Clock Productions, an independent film production company, alongside a few of her fellow RTF’ers. She is Treasurer for Northwestern Women Filmmakers’ Alliance (NUWFA) and co-President of Undergrad RTVF Student Association (URSA). After graduation, she hopes to work as an independent film producer.
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

J. P. Sniadecki, assistant professor of Radio/TV/Film, is a filmmaker and anthropologist active in the United States and China. An affiliate of the Sensory Ethnography Lab, he holds a PhD in social anthropology from Harvard. His films have screened at festivals such as the Berlinale, Locarno, New York, AFI, Edinburgh, Rotterdam, San Francisco, Viennale, Vancouver, BAFICI, RIDM, Cinema du Reel, Riviera Maya, FICUNAM, and DOChina as well as at venues such as New York’s MoMA and Guggenheim, Vienna’s MAC, Beijing’s UCCA, the 2014 Shanghai Biennale, and the 2014 Whitney Biennale. His films include Chalqijan/Demolition (2010), winner of the Joris Ivens Award; Foreign Parts (2010), winner of two Leopards at Locarno and named best film at the Punto de Vista Film Festival and DocsBarcelona; People’s Park (2012), named best anthropological film at Festival dei Popoli; and Yumen (2013), named best experimental film and best Chinese film at the Taiwan International Documentary Film Festival. Sniadecki’s latest feature, The Iron Ministry (2014), has screened widely and garnered jury prizes at the Ann Arbor Film Festival and the Valdivia and Camden International Film Festivals. Co-organizer of the traveling film series “Cinema on the Edge: The Best of the Beijing Independent Film Festival,” he has written articles and interviews for Cinema Scope and contributed essays to Visual Anthropology Review and the edited volume DV-Made China (Hawaii University Press).

LECTURERS

Zina Camblin is a Lecturer in the Department of Radio/TV/Film. Zina completed the playwriting program at The Juilliard School under Marsha Norman and Christopher Durang, as a part of the Juilliard Playwriting Fellowship. While at Juilliard, she received the Lecomte du Nouy Prize for playwriting. Her play, “And Her Hair Went With Her,” was selected as part of Lincoln Centers Directors Lab play reading series. The play was optioned for a New York production when it caught the attention of actress Whoopi Goldberg. In addition, “And Her Hair Went With Her,” had successful readings at The Culture Project, and the Tribeca Festival, and has been produced by regional theaters around the country including, The Phoenix Theater in Indianapolis, New Jersey Repertory Theater, Horizon Theater in Atlanta, The Fountain Theater in Los Angeles, and the Unicorn Theater in Kansas City. Past productions and workshops of her other work include: Memoirs to Live/ Brooklyn Arts Exchange, Bedroom Stories/ Jon Sims Center for the Performing Arts, in San Francisco, Life’s a Drag/ UC San Diego, and Bunny and Clyde/The Know Theater. She has also completed several commissioned projects for various universities and theaters. As a consultant for NYU’s Creative Arts Team, she helped to create several interactive theatre scripts for young audiences and as an assistant writer, editor, and researcher for the Tectonic Theater Project, she helped devise two of their productions; “The Jonesest Project,” and “I Think I Like Girls.” Her television credits include development projects with both NBC, Warner Bros, and Sheen/Estevez Productions, and being on the writing staff of the cable show, “Let’s Stay Together,” produced by Queen Latifah.

Stephen Cone is a Lecturer in the Department of Radio/TV/Film who has numerous acting, directing, producing and editing credits in film, video and television. His film “The Wise Kids,” which he directed, wrote, produced and acted, was a New York Times Critics Pick, earned eight awards and has been screened at more than 50 festivals worldwide. Other films include his most recent “Henry Gamble’s Birthday Party” (BAMcinemaFest, Frameline), as well as “Black Box” starring Austin Pendleton. As an actor, Cone starred in Ignaty Vishnevetsky’s debut film “Ellie Lumme”, and recently appeared in a featured role on Showtime’s “Shameless”. Cone has taught acting and directing courses at Second City, Chicago Filmmakers, Acting Studio Chicago and several other Chicago-area studios and conservatories. He earned a bachelor degree in theatre from University of South Carolina.

Chaz Evans is a Lecturer in the Department of Radio/TV/Film. He is a media artist, art historian, educator, and curator based in Chicago. His work deals with software, performance, and histories of art and technology. His work has been exhibited at such venues as ACRE Projects, Hyde Park Art Center, Evanston Art Center, and Chicago Artists’ Coalition. His writing has been published by Routledge, Journal of Games Criticism, and the A.V. Club. He teaches courses on creative programming, web art, moving image art, and games. He holds an MA in art history and an MFA in new media art from University of Illinois at Chicago. He is also Director of Exhibitions and Programs of Video Game Art (VGA) Gallery.

Stephan Moore is a Lecturer in the Department of Radio/Television/Film. His creative work is primarily concerned with the creation and perception of sonic environments, encompassing practices in field recording, physical programming, studio production, audio spatialization, loudspeaker construction and interactive software design, manifesting as sound installations, sound designs and scores for dance and theater productions, solo and group performance works and improvisations, and recordings. As a musician and sound engineer, he toured with the Merce Cunningham Dance company from 2004 to 2010. He was given a 2010 New York Dance and Performance “Bessie” Award for his score to choreographer Yanira Castro’s Dark Horse/Black Forest, and a 2013 nomination for his score to The People To Come. He is the President of the American Society for Acoustic Ecology, a member of the Wingspace Design Collective, and an active curator, most recently of the exhibition In the Garden of Sonic Delights at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts. Moore holds an MFA in Electronic Art from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a Ph.D. in Electronic Music and Multimedia Composition from Brown University.
Ines Sommer is associate director of the MFA program in Documentary Media and a Lecturer in the Department of Radio/Television/Film. A Chicago-based filmmaker, cinematographer, film programmer, and educator, she has directed and produced genre-crossing films for more than two decades, ranging from experimental 16mm films to video documentaries. Among her current projects is the documentary Count Me In, recipient of a MacArthur Foundation grant, to be broadcast nationally in late 2015 with Chicago’s WTTW-Channel 11 as presenting station. Her Beneath the Blindfold was named best political documentary of 2012 by the Chicago Reader and has screened at international film festivals and universities, for human rights groups, and on Capitol Hill for Congress members and staff. Sommer’s credits as a cinematographer include numerous award-winning broadcast documentaries for Chicago’s Kartemquin Films and other production companies. Sommer has taught film and video production at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Northwestern’s Medill School, and elsewhere and has held positions as a film programmer, film festival director, and arts administrator. In 2008 she cofounded Percolator Films, a community-based nonprofit media arts organization that organizes film festivals, series, and events in Evanston and Chicago. Sommer holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Derek Trulson. Derek has plenty of work experience in higher education student and faculty support, from UofC, to Cornell, to NU’s Kellogg with the registrars, where he was awarded the Kellogg Spirit of Excellence Award. Do ask him about his time at U of C as a projectionist for Roger Ebert and Michael Phillips.

Thomas Bradshaw was profiled in the latest Chicago Magazine about his art and his play “Fulfillment,” which also received a positive review from The New York Times for its performance at The Flea Theatre in New York City. The Goodman will produce the world premiere of Bradshaw’s play Carlyle this spring. “Carlyle” is about an African-American politician who is a member of the Republican Party and was first featured during The Goodman’s 2014 New Stages Festival.

Stephen Cone’s film Henry Gamble’s Birthday Party was featured at this year’s Chicago International Film Festival and is the recipient of the Silver Q Hugo award.

Scott Curtis’s book, The Shape of Spectatorship: Art, Science, and Early Cinema in Germany was published by Columbia University Press this year. In it he explores the collision between expert vision and moving images in science, medicine, education, and aesthetics. He was a lecturer at the Chicago Film Seminar in October, presenting “Experts and Their Images: Vision, Form, and the Historiography of Media Use” at the Chicago Film Seminar in October and his presentation “Objectivity in Early Scientific and Medical Film Viewing,” edited by Ángel Quintana and Jordi Pons in Girona, Spain Fundació Museu del Cinema/Ajuntament de Girona, was part of the 9th Seminar on the Origins and History of Cinema, Objectivity and the Effects of Truth: Early Cinema and the Realist Tradition.

Zayd Dohrn’s untitled drama series has been acquired by Showtime, with Tobey Maguire’s Material Pictures attached. His play Muckrakers was produced at New Repertory Theatre in Boston, and his play Reborning opened at the Fountain Theatre, where it was an LA Times “Critic’s Pick.”

Erik Gernand (MFA class of ’08 and faculty member) received a non-Equity Jeff nomination for Best New Work for his play A Place in the Woods.

Rebecca Gilman is the 2015 Steinberg/ATCA award recipient for her play “Luna Gale.” She was additionally honored at the NU Faculty Recognition Dinner held at the president’s house on Sept 28 for this award. Additionally The Acting Company’s one act interpretations of Tennessee Williams short stories, featuring her play based on “The Field of Blue Children” (1937), received a write-up by The New York Times. The play is set at contemporary University of Alabama with Williams’s main character, Myra, as Layley, a sorority sister drawn to a poet. Her new play “Soups, Stews, and Casseroles: 1976” is part of the Goodman’s regular season.

Kyle Henry’s short doc Half-Life of War continues to play festivals, including the Dallas VideoFest in October. He completed principal production of his latest fiction feature film “The Year That Changed Us”, shot in Chicago and Evanston, in September.
Josh Horvath was nominated for two Jeff Awards, one for "The Hammer Trinity, Part 3: The Excelsior King" at The House Theatre of Chicago and another for "Native Son" at the Court Theatre and American Blues Theatre.

Stephan Moore was featured at ac3 Art Projects in an exhibition titled "Exhibiting Sound" from October 22 to November 14, 2015. The exhibition, affiliated with the conference Exhibiting Sound at the University of Alberta, posed the question “What does it mean for sound to be exhibited?” Moore was interviewed by Vue Weekly on his participation within this exhibit.

Hamid Naficy co-taught a two-week course on "intermingling of film," focusing on the Middle Eastern émigré filmmakers making films in Germany at the University of Cologne from August 24 to September 3, with Brigitte Weingart at Summer Institute Cologne (SIC!). As an invited filmmaker he coorganized with the Middle East and North African Studies (MENA) Program "Pouran Derakhshandeh: Women and the Making of Social Cinema," which involved screening of two features by Iranian director at Block Cinema, Hush! Girls Don’t Cry and Twenty 2009 and visits with students, classes, and the MENA Program, from April 14 to 20. Naficy gave the Keynote Speech, "Theorizing the Artisanal production Mode—the case of Iranian Silent Cinema," at the International Conference on Early Cinema in the Balkans and the Near East in Athens, Greece in June and participated in "Roundtable Discussion: General Thoughts on the Conference and Prospects for the Future." He chaired the panels "Media, Politics," and "Tracing the National" at Theorizing Transformations in the Middle East and North Africa conference at Northwestern University on October 22. He was interviewed for seven episodes of Aparaj (Aparatus), a sixty- to ninety-minute show aired by the BBC Persian between June and July in London, England. All episodes focused on Farshad Fadaian's documentaries, which were screened in full during the programs. He was also interviewed by Ozde Çeliktemel-Thomen for "From Early Iranian Cinema to the Accented Cinema: An Interview with Professor Hamid Naficy," Sinecine Sinema Araştırmalar Dergis/ Sinecine Journal of Film Studies 6:2 2015 (Güz/ Autumn) [in Turkish]. He presented "Toward a Multiplex Cinema," at the University of Cologne in Germany on September 2, and "From Accented Cinema to Multiplex Cinema," at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on October 14.

Hamid Naficy, Deb Tolchinsky, and Dave Tolchinsky traveled to Havana this summer with Karey Fuhls of the International Program Development Office, through the U.S. Department of State’s 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Fund, and with support from RTF, to create connections to Cuban (film) institutions/filmmakers.

Brett Neveu’s play “Pilgrim’s Progress,” starring Oscar nominee Michael Shannon, premiered at A Red Orchid Theatre this November. “Pilgrim's Progress” has been listed as number 3 in Chicago Magazine’s Most Anticipated Plays list this fall and just received a great review in The Chicago Tribune.

Eric Patrick’s film “Retrocognition” screened in the Chicago International Film Festival as part of the “City and State” shorts program and is one of 20 US professors chosen as fellows for the Television Academy Foundation’s Faculty Seminar in Los Angeles.

Miriam Petty and Nick Davis joined Chicago Humanities Festival to discuss "12 Years A Slave.” Their discussion looked at the complicated history of plantation history depiction, and unpacked those traditions through close analysis of important works, from television landmarks like “Roots” to independent films like “Sankofa” and "Daughters of the Dust.”

Ariel Rogers has three articles slated for publication in 2016: ‘Constructing a Synchrofield: Benjamin Schlanger’s 1930s Experiments with Screen and Theater Design’ will appear in German translation in the journal montage (in Turkish). He presented "Theorizing the Artisanal production Mode—the case of Iranian Silent Cinema," at the International Conference on Early Cinema in the Balkans and the Near East in Athens, Greece in June and participated in "Roundtable Discussion: General Thoughts on the Conference and Prospects for the Future." He chaired the panels "Media, Politics," and "Tracing the National" at Theorizing Transformations in the Middle East and North Africa conference at Northwestern University on October 22. He was interviewed for seven episodes of Aparaj (Aparatus), a sixty- to ninety-minute show aired by the BBC Persian between June and July in London, England. All episodes focused on Farshad Fadaian's documentaries, which were screened in full during the programs. He was also interviewed by Ozde Çeliktemel-Thomen for "From Early Iranian Cinema to the Accented Cinema: An Interview with Professor Hamid Naficy," Sinecine Sinema Araştırmalar Dergis/ Sinecine Journal of Film Studies 6:2 2015 (Güz/ Autumn) [in Turkish]. He presented "Toward a Multiplex Cinema," at the University of Cologne in Germany on September 2, and "From Accented Cinema to Multiplex Cinema," at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago on October 14.

Ozge Samanci created the amazing interactive installation Fiber Optic Ocean, a data driven interactive installation that composes music, in Fisk Hall. The work conveys the consequences of technology’s invasion of oceans. The installation was featured on the Field Museum blog Brain Scoop as well as Adafruit.

Jeffrey Sconce had an article published in Communication +1, vol.4, titled "The Ghostularity.”

Former Blake Babies drummer Freda Love Smith’s book Red Velvet Underground: A Rock Memoir with Recipes, came out in October on Agate/Midway. The book features recipes "that take her from tour bus to school bus and eventually to teaching her teenage sons to cook before they leave home." In addition to the Boston-bred Blake Babies, Smith was in Antenna and the Mysteries of Life. She’s now a columnist for Paste magazine as well as a lecturer at Northwestern University.
FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015

Jacob Smith, the Director of the MA in Sound Arts and Industries, can be heard on Radiolab, talking about Allen Funt’s pioneering ‘reality’ shows: “Candid Microphone” and “Candid Camera.” Jacob Smith and Neil Kanwar Harish Verma co-edited volume Anatomy of Sound: Norman Corwin and Media Authorship is now in production and will be published by the University of California Press in the spring. Smith also wrote the introductory article, “Listening to Film Sound,” for a special dossier on film sound in the online journal, The Cine-Files, Issue 8, Spring 2015 and served as editor for the special dossier. On April 22, 2015 he gave an invited talk at the Savannah College of Art and Design entitled, “Phonograph Toys and Early Sound Cartoons: Towards a History of Visualized Phonography.”

J.P. Sniadecki’s new film “The Iron Ministry” was reviewed by New York Times’ A.O. Scott who wrote: “The Iron Ministry,” J. P. Sniadecki’s new film, could almost be described as the documentary version of Mr. Bong’s dystopian, futuristic fantasy. Mr. Sniadecki’s trains, which criss-cross China and on which he spent nearly three years filming, doesn’t quite hold all of humanity. It just feels that way.’ The film was shown at Facets as well as Block Cinema.

David Tolchinsky’s full-length play, “Clear,” was one of six selected to be published in 2015/issue 3 of Proscenium Theatre Journal. The journal also ran a long interview with him. Previously, he was commissioned by Fork the Man Productions to write the film The Coming of Age and is now one of the co-producers on the project; the film is complete and is being submitted to film festivals. Tolchinsky was also nominated for Best Play and was named Best Directed at the Strawberry One-Act Play Festival, Hudson Guild Theatre, New York City, in February, for his play Where’s the Rest of Me? Tolchinsky was honored for this directing award at the NU Faculty Recognition dinner on September 28. The play was selected for inclusion in a volume of the best plays from the festival, to be published later this winter. His feature, Girl (screenwriter and associate producer), “from a million years ago” said Tolchinsky, starring Dominique Swain, Selma Blair, Portia de Rossi and Sean Patrick Flanery, was released on Vine. Most importantly, his Spock collection (and maybe his thoughts on Spock as a compelling character but mostly the collection itself) was celebrated in The Chicago Tribune by Duaa Eldeib: “Northwestern Professor Has Spock Collection that’s out of this World.”

Debra Tolchinsky and the MFA in Documentary Media Program were highlighted in Documentary Magazine in an interview with Tolchinsky wherein she discusses the process of creating the Documentary Media program.

Debra Tolchinsky’s 2011 feature documentary Fast Talk (co-produced by David Tolchinsky) was released on two VOD platforms, Googleplay and YouTube (paid). It continues to be available on Amazon Instant and iTunes.

Excited to see our MFA in Writing for Screen+Stage director David Tolchinsky and our MFA in Doc Media program director Debra Tolchinsky at #8 on Newcity’s Film 50. A great honor for both of them, the program and the department.


STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015

PhD in Screen Cultures

Laura LaPlaca won a grant from the American Heritage Center to fund archival research with The Ozzie & Harriet Nelson Papers at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. She will also be delivering a public talk at the university excerpted from her dissertation Show Rooms: Domestic Sitcom Architecture 1929 - 1959. She has collaborated with The Paley Center for Media, The USC Viterbi School, the US National Academy of Engineering, and TV producer Lee Zlotoff on their new project “The Next MacGyver” - a screenwriting competition that will result in a pilot for a new version of MacGyver aimed at a youth audience and featuring a female engineer.

Jason Roberts’s chapter published in the book Talking About Pauline Kael: Critics, Filmmakers, and Scholars Remember an Icon. Titled So Meaninglessly Present: Pauline Kael Watches Movies on TV.
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015

MFA IN DOCUMENTARY MEDIA

Over the course of the summer, MFA in Documentary Media Graduate Students held internships at a number of prestigious organizations:

Carlos Cova Ramire ('16): Kartemquin Films
Rafie Drencheva ('16): Tree Tree Tree
Shuhan Fan ('16): Beijing Nengliang Television
Jasmine Huff ('16): William Nixon
Miasarah Lai ('16): China Agricultural University Center for Documentary Studies
Deborah Libby ('16): Trinley Pictures
Joao Queiroga ('16): Viacom Inc.
Sara Reed ('16): Evergreen Pictures/Lauren Greenfield Photography
Justin Reifert ('16): Groundswell Educational Films
Jesseca Simmons ('16): Southern Environmental Law Center
Brittany Shyne ('16): FilmDayton
Qihui Wu ('16): Zhao Liang Film Studio

In May, the MFA in Documentary Media students were honored to volunteer at Good Pitch Chicago. Good Pitch brings together documentary filmmakers with foundations and philanthropists to forge coalitions and campaigns that are good for all partners, good for the films and good for society. Good Pitch Chicago featured six films, Almost Sunrise, Raising Bertie, Newtown: A Documentary, (T)error, From This Day Forward, and Romeo Is Bleeding.

MFA in Documentary Media student Julio Molica was nominated for the International Emmy Award For Current Affairs for a documentary he co-created called Torre de David (Tower of David). Molica co-created the documentary while working for Brazil’s Globo News. Tower of David tells the story of the 4,000 people that occupied an unfinished 45-story skyscraper in Caracas, Venezuela. They lived in the tallest vertical slum in the world for seven years. The characters’ stories illustrate the Venezuelan reality, violence, social issues and politics are embedded in their daily reality.

Rafie Drencheva & Jesseca Simmons film “Particles” screened at AUBG International Student Film Festival, Speechless Film Festival, World Arts Film Festival, and Dirigo Film Festival.

Carlos Cova’s film “Ride Fast Now” screened at AUBG International Student Film Festival.
Joao Queiroga & Shuhan Fan’s film “Journey to America” screened at Dallas VideoFest.

Deborah Libby’s film “The Healing Song” screened at AUBG International Student Film Festival, Clean Shorts Film Festival, Just Gather Film Festival, Frederick Film Festival, and Awareness Film Festival.

MFA IN WRITING FOR SCREEN + STAGE

Over the course of the summer, MFA in Writing for Stage+Screen Graduate Students held internships at a number of prestigious organizations:

Urasa Burapachep ('16): Greenlight Films
Pedro Castillo ('16): After School Matters
Patrick Corley ('16): New Horizon Films
Jacob Cullen ('16): Sentinel Pictures
Kate Fahlsing ('16): Arts + Labor
Mercedes Lake ('16): Living Room Playmakers
Diana Losen ('16): A Red Orchid Theatre
Roger Quincy Mason ('16): Ensemble Studio Theatre LA
Thomas Murphey ('16): Living Room Playmakers
Alexander Phillips ('16): Full Spectrum Features
Lin Tu ('16): Haven Entertainment

Pedro Castillo (class of ‘16) worked on the show opening the Goodman’s 2016 season: “Another Word for Beauty” by renown playwright Jose Rivera. Pedro was a production assistant during rehearsals over the summer and will continue to assist later this winter. Additionally he is a member of the show’s band for the actual
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2015

performances. The show runs January 15 to February 21, 2016. "Another Word for Beauty" is based on the beauty pageants held annually in Colombia’s maximum security prison for women.

Roger Q. Mason (class of ’16) has been commissioned to write a new play for the seventh season of This Time Festival. The play will debut Off-Broadway with run dates from January 16 to February 6, 2016.

“The Book of Judith” by Hope Rehak (class of ’17) performed in October by Mots de Changers at Dixon Place in Manhattan as part of the series titled “Let Your Women Keep Silence”

RTF Undergraduates

Over the course of the summer, RTF undergraduates held internships at a number of prestigious organizations:

Eliza Abramson (’17): Paramount Pictures
Ryan Alpert (’17): Viacom Inc.
Mary Anane (’18): Music Box Films
David Brown (’16): Apatow Productions
Karen Collins (’18): Awesomeness TV
Nicholas Dimaso (’16): The Whitehouse Post
Roberto Drilea (’17): Kindling Group
Elizabeth Frieder (’18): Above Average
Eric Goldstein (’17): Red Hour Films
Danielle Harris (’18): DB Goldline
Marion Hill (’17): Carousel Productions
Daniel Jude (’17): Disruption Entertainment
Russell Kahn (’17): Blumhouse Productions
Halle Lukasiewicz (’19): Definition 6 // WNET
Erin Manning (’18): Viacom Inc.
Camille Michelotti (’18): 93.1 WXRT
Christopher Reichert (’17): SOCIAL Enjoyments
Tracy Rosenblum (’18): Atlanta Jewish Film Festival
James Scoliard (’17): Blumhouse Productions
Isaac Sims (’18): Good Universe
Maryssa Sklaroff (’18): Avalon Management

Sam Freedman (’16) won third place at the 2015 College Television Awards in Los Angeles for his comedy “Vernacular.”

Congratulations to the 2015 Media Arts Grant recipients:

Summer Benowitz for "Lust"
Carolyn Betts for "Stay the Night"
Tess Cohen for “Functioning”
Megan Connolly for "The PTA"
Natalie Frazier for “Last Night at Lawndale Manor”
Mei Gao for “Sanctuary”
Matthew Griffin for “The Road to DeMarcus”
Danielle Harris for “Jackie”
Chelsea Jacobson for “The Blackout With Chelsea Jacobson”
Anna Luy Tan for “Chaos in Motion”
Sarah Oberholtzer for “Through Our Lense”
Anjali Nath for “Rooms”
Eliot Nick for “Alice”
Michael Nowakowski for “Moon and Back”
Rachael Pennington for “/Mastermind”
Evan Rindler for “Beesting”
Ethan Senser and Grace Hahn for “Taller than the Trees”
Isaac Sims for “Do No Harm”
Mario Soto for “Still There”
Samuel Spahn for “Oath”
Dominique Teeh for “The Cave”
Adam Turkel for “39 Across”
MFA IN WRITING FOR SCREEN + STAGE ALUMNI

Sara Accuardi’s (MFA class of '09) play was chosen for this year’s Seven Devils Playwrights Conference.

Nayna Agrawal (MFA class of '15) joined Grey’s Anatomy as a writer’s P.A. in May. In September, she performed her selected short fiction piece “Envy and Tuberculosis” at the Zephyr Theater in Los Angeles. She was recently awarded a three-month writing residency in France, funded in part by the Tenot Foundation.

Nayna Agrawal and Will Arbery (MFA class of '15) were listed as two of Variety’s 110 Students to Watch.

Erin Austin (MFA class of '13) won the 2015 Red Theater Playwriting Competition for her play “Insert Heart Here” on Sunday.

Carrie Barrett’s (MFA class of '08) short film OPEN HOUSE was just selected as the winner of the Los Angeles Film Festival/ Funny or Die Make ‘Em LAFF Showcase. It was directed by fellow Northwestern MFA graduate Marisha Mukerjee with help from fellow MFA graduate Lauren Bennett. She is also one of five playwrights chosen for the Humanitas/CTG PLAY LA Workshop.

Gabrielle Fulton (MFA class of ’10), whose play “Uprising” at Horizon Theatre Company received 4 nominations for the Suzi Bass Awards in Atlanta, including Outstanding World Premiere. “Uprising” was also part of Women’s Voices Festival in DC.

Sarah Gubbins’ (MFA class of ’08) play Cocked is featured as one of six new plays to debut Off-Broadway, produced by The Atlantic Theater Company and premiered at Victory Gardens in the spring.

Stephanie Kornick (MFA class of ’10) is a writer’s assistant on Transparent.

Jenni Lamb (MFA class of ’12) has been named as a member of the Goodman Theatre’s 2016 Playwrights Unit. It’s the Goodman’s sixth iteration of the Playwrights Unit and their first all-female group. She is also the inaugural winner of Route 66 Theater Company’s New Play Development Workshop.

Marisha Mukerjee (MFA class of ’11) has joined the writing staff of NBC’s Heroes: Reborn.

Onicia Muller’s (MFA class of ’14) production of Oh Baby! completed its run at The Side Project Theater on June 2. Directed by NU MFA Directing alum Spencer Neiman, Oh Baby! is a collection of four short comedic plays about couples and babies.

Eoghan O’Donnell (MFA class of ’09) wrapped his CW show The Messengers, where he served as showrunner and producer. He has been hired as the co-executive producer for the second season of MTV’s Scream TV series.

Milta Ortiz (MFA class of ’12) received a stunning review for her play “Más” performed at Borderlands Theatre.

Shannon Pritchard’s play (MFA class of ’14) “Traces” premiered at Jackalope Theatre Company in Chicago this past March, as the inaugural production in their Pioneer series. Her play “Practice Babies” received a staged reading at TimeLine Theatre in April as part of their TimePieces series.

Latin Post interviews Alvaro Saar Rios (MFA class of ’10) about his new play Luchadora.

Jen Spyra (MFA class of ’12) is part of the writing staff of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.

Dusty Wilson’s (MFA class of ’14) play Luz Estrada will receive its world premiere at Mercy Street Theatre company next summer.

Sofya Weitz and Will Arbery’s (MFA class of ’15) production of Weitz’s original play “Lady” has been chosen as part of the 2015 Araca Project.

MFA alumnae Milta Ortiz, Meridith Friedman, Sarah Gubbins and Jenni Lamb made The Kilroys List and Honorable Mentions this year.
**ALUMNI NEWS**

**RTVF Undergraduate Alumni**

**Harrison Atkins** (RTF ‘12) world premiere of his film “Lace Crater” took place at the Toronto International Film Festival September 15, 2015, with a European debut at Sitges Film Festival in Spain on October 15, 2015. The Directing for Screen Module presented the film November 11 at Helmerich Auditorium. “Lace Crater” is about Ruth, whose weekend tryst with a ghost leads to strange physical changes and a social meltdown with her circle of friends. His 2014 film “Chocolate Heart” was part of Elevated Films Chicago’s Telltale Hearts: Four Films of Love and Death November 10th, 2015.

**Dave Holstein** (RTF/CWMP), writer and producer on The Brink, had his interactive musical featured in The Chicago Tribune.

**Laurel Cohen**’s (RTF ‘15) “The Very True Story About What Happened to Your Goldfish” beat out 350 entries to win the Bronze Award at the Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival’s College Shorts Division.

**RTVF STAFF NEWS**

**Calum Michel Walter**, Cinematography Specialist, had the world premiere of his new film this year, “Terrestrial” at the Toronto International Film Festival, its US premiere at the New York Film Festival and also played in Chile at FIC Valdivia. On October 19th he traveled to Cyprus to show his film “Relief” at the Cyprus International Short Film Festival and taught a workshop on Filmmaking to locals and festival attendees. “Relief” also played at the Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival on October 27.

Congratulations to **Michelle Yamada**. Her position has evolved with all of the department’s new programs and initiatives and Michelle took on new task after new task in such an excellent manner that her position has been reclassified from Financial Coordinator to Business Administrator Level 2. This represents a well-deserved promotion of two steps on the administrative ladder. This is a process begun by Professor Mimi White as Interim Chair, happily continued by Department Chair David Tolchinsky, and fully supported by Associate Dean Rick Morris, who ultimately made the promotion happen.

Congratulations to **Patrick Lile**, MFA in Documentary Media Program Assistant and **Shannon Pritchard**, MFA in Writing for Stage+Screen Program Assistant who have both been promoted to Program Assistant Level 3. As the MFA programs (and department) have evolved, so too have their positions. In response, they have plunged in, addressing new developments and coming up with their own excellent initiatives and ideas, performing their jobs in a most extraordinary way.

**GENERAL DEPARTMENT NEWS**

**MA in Sound Arts & Industries (SA&I)**

The MA in Sound Arts and Industries, Northwestern University School of Communication’s newest Master’s program will welcome its first cohort next year. Sound Arts and Industries offers a flexible architecture for artists, theorists, designers, programmers, storytellers and others who – wherever they work – place sound and sonic expression at the center of their practice.
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Roberta Stack: Director of Undergraduate Programs
Lynn Spigel: Director of the Screen Cultures Center
Debra Tolchinsky: Director of MFA in Documentary Media
Ines Sommer: Associate Director of MFA in Documentary Media
Jacob Smith: Director of MA in Sound Arts and Industries, Director of Graduate Studies in Screen Cultures Program

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