Faculty

Hamid Naficy is a leading authority in cultural studies of diaspora, exile, and postcolonial cinemas and media, and of Iranian and Middle Eastern cinemas and media. His areas of research and teaching include these topics as well as documentary and ethnographic cinemas.

Over the summer and early fall this past year, Dr. Naficy worked with Northwestern University’s Block Museum of Art media curator Michelle Puetz and other staff to organize a major event that aimed to examine and celebrate the Iranian cinema and its films, filmmakers, and movie poster art. The poster exhibition, Salaam Cinema: 50 Years of Iranian Movie Posters, is curated from Dr. Naficy’s Iranian Movie Poster Collection, deposited at Northwestern University Archives. It opened on October 6, and features dozens of colorful, large size, pre- and post-revolution posters for popular and art house movies.

The exhibition included an accompanying film series and symposium. The film series, Iranian Cinephilia: From Filmfarsi to Art House Cinema, ran to November 18 and featured a dozen movies, mostly art house films from pre-and post-revolution. The opening film event showcased a retrospective of films made by Nousreddin Zarrinkelk, known as “the father of Iranian animation,” who was present to discuss his films. Documentarian Mojtaba Mirtahmasb also screened his latest film and discussed it with the audience. Many of the subsequent films highlighted the cinephilic culture and cinema inside Iran. Three other key filmmakers, from inside Iran and in the US, screened their films and engaged with audiences and scholars.

The symposium, Lucid Figurations: Iranian Movie Poster Art/ Film Art, took place November 17 and 18. It consisted of two panels of nine scholars and two filmmakers; one focused on the art of movie posters, and the other on the motion picture art. Filmmakers Rakhshan Banietemad, Mehrnaz Saeedvafa, and Ahmad Kiarostami were present and screened their films.

Screen Cultures PhD

Ashley R. Smith is a 5th year PhD Candidate in Screen Cultures currently working on her dissertation, “Hillbillies, Yuppies, and the American Tourist in Peril: The Crisis of American National Identity in 1970s Horror Cinema and Beyond.” This current project explores how anxieties associated with the recognition of difference within whiteness have been articulated in modern and contemporary horror cinema. More broadly, her research interests focus on fears associated with the collapsing or blurring of boundaries, and medicalized trauma on screens. Ashley completed her MA in Cinema Studies at NYU where she discovered her love of horror films by binge-watching monstrous media for her master’s qualifying exams. She is an avid volunteer in her local Edgewater community at NewStory Church and George B. Swift Specialty School, and in her spare time she enjoys cooking, training to be a competitive jigsaw puzzler, and cuddling with her cat, Vivien Leigh.
**SPOTLIGHT! CONTINUED**

**MFA in Documentary Media**

Ashley S. Brandon’s (Class of ’17) film WHERE WE’VE BEEN screened as part of the Citizen Jane Film Festival’s Emerging Voices shorts program. The film also played at the Midwest Independent Film Festival this past fall. Ashley was recently awarded the Tribeca Film Institute & ESPN Future Filmmaker Prize for her upcoming documentary, ON THE BIT (directed by Luther Clement, MFA in Documentary Media Class of '17). She is also the producer of the film STAY CLOSE (directed by Luther Clement), which was also awarded the Tribeca Film Institute & ESPN Future Filmmaker Prize.

This past summer, Ashley interned with the Oscar-winning documentarian Cynthia Wade in the Berkshires, Massachusetts. Working as an assistant editor, she helped on several productions, BACKFIRE (Al Jazeera) and MUDFLOW (Chicken & Egg Pictures). She is currently in post-production on her thesis film MICKEY’S PETS, which follows the journey of a young female taxidermist competing at the US Taxidermy Championships. Her films have played at festivals such as Slamdance, Cinequest, Portland (OR), and the Los Angeles Women’s Film Festival. In 2014 her film PUNCHES & PEDICURES was nominated as a finalist at the Student Academy Awards. Over the past several years she’s worked under filmmakers such as Julia Reichert, Lucy Walker and Todd Haynes. She is currently in the developmental stage of a hybrid doc endeavor focusing on the life and legacy of her great-great-aunt and sharpshooter, Annie Oakley. When not making films, Ashley likes to drink La Croix, pet dogs, and make dank memes.

**MFA in Writing for Screen + Stage**

Kate Royal (Class of ’17) is a playwright and filmmaker whose work largely centers on character-driven stories of women and the LGBT+ community. Through her experience at Northwestern and beyond, Kate has been lucky to find many opportunities and projects across multiple fields. This past summer, she completed an internship with Pegasus Theatre Chicago, where she served as a workshop leader and first-round judge for their Young Playwrights Festival. She has freelanced film and television criticism for [AfterEllen.com](http://AfterEllen.com), while serving as a staff writer for the film blog Monday Morning Matinee ([mmmfilm.net](http://mmmfilm.net)). This past November, she participated in an interdisciplinary symposium on the series [Transparent](http://Transparent) hosted by the Susan B. Anthony Institute for Gender & Women’s Studies at the University of Rochester, with her paper to be published by the University later this year.

In 2017, Kate is looking forward to several exciting projects. First, she is developing a reading of her play *The Nameless Days of Gumdrop Smith* for a January or February workshop. In the spring, she will be celebrating the release of the first season of her web series IN REAL LIFE, about the lives of four LGBT+ millennials, through [OpenTV](http://OpenTV). In the fall, her play *Girls Can Tell* will receive its first full production at the Rochester Institute of Technology, where she has also been invited as a guest/visiting playwright. Currently, she is working on two new plays: *Queen For A Day* (recipient of a ten-minute workshop reading at Chicago Dramatists), and *Gal Pals*, which she hopes will workshopped in the coming months. In addition, she is under contract for the exclusive rights to write and produce a screen adaptation of historian Rachel Hope Cleves’ 2014 book *Charity & Sylvia: A Same-Sex Marriage in Early America*, the screenplay for which will serve as her graduate thesis.

**MA in Sound Arts and Industries**

Patrick Hockberger (Class of 2017) has continued working on his podcast, *The Podcast Opera*. For the second season, he will feature a take on the familiar story of the Wright Brothers, exploring some of the lesser-known details. Patrick argues that the story that we have come to know really only comes from one source: Wilbur Wright’s authorized biography. Some of Patrick’s research has uncovered lawsuits Wright was involved in disputing the first person to fly as well as the tumultuous relationship with his sister, who was removed from the biography after a fight despite being mentioned in contemporary newspaper articles detailing the race for flight. The second season also examines some of the less scandalous aspects of the Wright Brothers, such as how their unbridled interest and enthusiasm in reading and researching aviation led them to successfully fly ahead of Samuel Langley, the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution who was funded from the War Department to build a piloted airplane. Each podcast episode is treated like a diary entry, as well as like each track on a concept album.
RTVF Undergraduate

Adam Turkel (Class of 2018) is currently a junior at Northwestern University studying Radio/Television/Film. Born and raised in New York City, he has pursued a career in film since high school, interning at production companies and agencies such as Atlantic Pictures and Brookside Artist Management. On campus, Adam has edited films for Studio 22 and the RTVF Directing for the Screen module. He is also an active graphic designer, creating logos and artwork for student organizations and theatrical productions. This past summer, he interned for NBC in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during their coverage of the 2016 Olympic Games.

In his second year at Northwestern, Adam received a Media Arts Grant from the RTVF department to write, direct, and edit a short mystery drama titled 39 Across. Inspired by the works of Hitchcock and Fincher along with old episodes of The Twilight Zone, the film follows a housewife who begins to doubt her husband’s fidelity when she encounters a frightening clue in a crossword puzzle. The project was also one of the two recipients of the department’s Joann Torretta Award. Since then, 39 Across has gone on to gain recognition from various festivals, winning an Award of Excellence from the 2016 Best Shorts Competition and being named Best Student Film at the 2016 Big Apple Film festival and the September 2016 Roma Cinema DOC. Adam spent his fall abroad studying screenwriting at the Film & TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU). When he returns to Northwestern this winter, he plans on declaring a minor in English and continuing his undergraduate work in the arts. For more information, go to adamturkel.com.

NEW FACES: WELCOME!

Emad Tayefeh has been named the 2017 Northwestern University School of Communication Artist-in-Residence, supported by a pilot program for artist-scholar refugees with funds provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The grant will be administered by the Department of Radio/Television/Film. Tayefeh, a documentary and fiction filmmaker, photographer, animator, and human rights activist, was born in Tehran in 1985 and holds a BA in Artificial Intelligence from Shomal University (Mazandaran Poly Technic University) in Amol-Mazandaran, Iran. Tayefeh was completing coursework toward his MFA in film directing and writing from Tehran South University when he was expelled for anti-government activism. Since June 2016, he has been based in New York seeking asylum. His prizewinning short films include SELFIE (2014, about a couple’s breakup told through selfies) and HOPE (2012, about an invisible boy who comforts troubled people). His continued documentary filmmaking in the face of government persecution has been covered in media outlets including the Guardian and the Huffington Post. Over the next year, as a faculty member in RTVF, Tayefeh will be teaching media-centered courses, giving public talks, and screening his work. His residency is offered in cooperation with the Kaplan Humanities Institute’s Artist in Residence Program; he is based in Kaplan’s artist studio in Kresge Hall where he looks forward to being a part of the broader Northwestern community. More about Emad Tayefeh can be found on his website at http://www.emadtayefeh.com.

Winter Adjuncts

Mickle Maher’s plays have appeared Off-Broadway and around the world, and have been supported by grants from the NEA, the Rockefeller MAP fund, and Creative Capital. They include There is a Happiness That Morning Is; Song About Himself; An Apology for the Course and Outcome of Certain Events Delivered by Doctor John Faustus on This His Final Evening; The Hunchback Variations; The Strangerer; Spirits to Enforce; Cyrano (translator); The Cabinet; Lady Madeline; The Pine; and An Actor Prepares (an adaptation of Stanislavsky’s seminal book). He is a cofounder of Chicago’s Theater Oobleck. He currently is writing the book and lyrics for a new musical about basketball commissioned by the Catastrophic Theatre of Houston and Daryl Morey, the General Manager of the Houston Rockets. His new play with Oobleck, Jim Lehrer and the Theater and Its Double and Jim Lehrer’s Double, premieres in January. More information at: http://theateroobleck.com.
NEW FACES CONTINUED

Lily Mooney returned as an adjunct lecturer teaching Writing with Improv this fall. Since 2012, she has been an ensemble member of The Neo-Futurists, where she has created and produced over 150 short experimental plays for the long-running late night show “Too Much Light Makes The Baby Go Blind.” She is also the co-creator and producer of The Arrow, a quarterly “anti-storytelling” event that subjects Neo-Futurist essays to spontaneous interruptions, using improvisation as a tool for disrupting and reimagining finished writing. Beyond her ongoing experiments with the Neos, her work has been produced by The Living Room Playmakers, The Chicago One-Minute Play Festival, Chicago Dramatists, and the DUMBO Arts Festival in Brooklyn.

Geoff Rice is teaching Improvising the Text-based Collaborative Show this winter. He is a graduate of NU's Theatre program and holds a Musical Theatre certificate as well. For the last two decades, he has worked as an actor, director, composer, and teaching artist with many of Chicago's leading theatres. His artistic home is with Barrel of Monkeys, a company that adapts CPS students' short stories into a highly acclaimed sketch-style show. He is passionate about comedy, collaboration, and the Cubs. Go 'Cats.

Maureen Ryan received her PhD from Northwestern University's Screen Cultures program in 2014, and her BA in Sociology and English from Loyola University Chicago. She is the author of the forthcoming book *Lifestyle Media and Gender in American Culture: A Better Everyday* (Routledge 2017), which offers a cultural history of food and home-centered media in the American media landscape from the postwar period to today. Her current research project is an edited collection of essays exploring the politics of new forms of feminism emerging in popular culture, tentatively titled *Emergent Feminisms: Challenging a Postfeminist Media Culture*. Other work has been published in *Television and New Media*, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, and *Feminist Media Histories*. She teaches courses on media and cultural studies, broadcast and film history, media ethics, media in everyday life, and food media studies.

Molly A. Schneider joins the faculty as an adjunct instructor for the 2017 winter quarter, teaching a seminar on TV Showrunners and Writer-Producers. She is a media historian focusing primarily on American television culture, and her teaching focuses on media history, theory, and criticism in a cultural context. Her most recent research has been a study of the midcentury television anthology drama, and her new project will look at the ways television has served as a “cautionary” medium through programming like after-school specials and made-for-TV movies. She is an alumna of the Screen Cultures PhD program here at Northwestern, and she also earned her bachelor’s degree at NU in Performance Studies. Between these stints as a Wildcat she earned her master’s degree in the Division of Critical Studies (now called Cinema and Media Studies) at the University of Southern California. She is very happy to return to NU once again!

Kris Swanberg began her film career at Southern Illinois University where she studied documentary film production. Using naturalistic techniques and often working with non-actors, Swanberg went on to focus her career in narrative film. Her first feature, IT WAS GREAT, BUT I WAS READY TO COME HOME played in competition at the SXSW Film Festival in 2009, followed by her next feature, EMPIRE BUILDER (2012) and short film BABY MARY (2014). Swanberg’s third feature, UNEXPECTED, premiered in competition at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival.

Barbara Wallace has written over twenty television pilots with writing partner, Thomas R. Wolfe. Five pilot scripts have been produced, and one (*Welcome to New York*) was picked up by CBS where it aired for a season. Formerly a Second City Main Stage actress, she has also worked in the theatre as a director and playwright. She has previously taught media writing at Northwestern University in the Department of Radio/Television/Film and improvisational acting at The Second City.
AWARDS

MAG AWARDS

The Media Arts Grant (or MAG) is a funding system administered through the Department of Radio/Television/Film to support student-driven filmmaking experiences. Congratulations to the following grant recipients:

Abitha Rakmachandran: EL SALON DEL JERIFE
Karen Collins: HATS - A Stop Motion Project
Katherine Kowalski: TRICK OR TREAT
Samuel Shapiro: PRESS FO(U)R
Georgia Bernstein: THE NORMALS
Nastasya Popov: DIARY OF A RETURN
Christopher Powell: THE CLUB
Ivy Gao: FACE TO FACE
Tianze Fan: WHERE INSPIRATION COMES FROM

FIG AWARDS

The following projects were awarded Festival Incentive Grants (FIG), to cover the cost of festival application fees. The FIGs are part of a broader effort by RTVF students to gain wider representation in the festival circuit for the excellent media work of RTVF students:

SHOWMAN, written and directed by Luther Clement
FRAGMENTS, written and directed by Carlos Cova and produced by Sofhia Doreste, Alan Leal and Carlos Cova
RUN OF PRESS, written and directed by Mina Fitzpatrick
CARE FOR ME, written and directed by Sam Freedman and produced by Thomas Molash & Isaac Sims
OF A FEW DAYS, written and directed by Timothy Fryett
BIRD OF PREY, written and directed by Marion Hill and produced by Erin Manning & Maddie Ball
THE OFFERING, written and directed by Iyabo Efua Kwayana
OGLESBY PARK, written and directed by Troy Lewis and produced by Tara Sennott
WISE MEDICINE, written and directed by Deborah Libby
I LOVE LUCY, written and directed by Zach Lorkiewicz and produced by Jacob Stern & Dylan DeLuca
PANGAEA, written and directed by Olivia Jasmine Peace and produced by Ethan Senser
MARY, written and directed by Madeline Plumley and produced by Rabail Habib
THANKSGIVING GUEST, written and directed by Zoe Pressman and produced by Lola Parchment & Katherine Foley
OUR SKIN, written and directed by João Quiroga and produced by Kevin Patrick Gorey
FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Clayton Brown’s production company, 137 Films, co-founded with fellow NU alum Monica Ross, has joined with Morgan Spurlock’s production company, Warrior Poet, and Indiegogo in a partnership to complete his documentary, WE BELIEVE IN DINOSAURS.

Stephen Cone, Maria Finitzo, Spencer Parsons, Ines Sommer, JP Sniadecki all received laudatory mention in New City’s annual “FILM 50” listing, which appeared in September, 2016 and focused exclusively on artists living and working in Chicago.

Stephen Cone’s film HENRY GAMBLE’S BIRTHDAY PARTY will be released on DVD and all VOD platforms (iTunes, Amazon, etc.) on May 3, 2017.

Zayd Dohrn won the Horton Foote Prize in playwriting for his play, THE PROFANE and was a recipient of the second round of 2016 Edgerton Foundation New Play Awards. THE PROFANE will have its world premiere off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons in March. He was also included on the ASG Faculty Honor Roll.

Maria Finitzo’s IN THE GAME screened on PBS World Channel’s America Reframed. Finitzo’s feature THOSE LEFT BEHIND also premiered at the Gene Siskel Film Center in September.

Rebecca Gilman was inducted into the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame in 2016. She and alumna Sarah Gubbins (MFA in Writing for the Screen + Stage ’10) were both commissioned to write short plays for the Goethe Institute’s Plurality of Privacy Project (P3M5). The project commissioned theatres and playwrights from all over the world to produce plays that explore the intersection of technology and privacy. Gubbins’ play, PRIVACY, was produced by the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta. Gilman’s play, INNER SANCTUM, was produced by Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Riad Ismat’s newest play MU’ASSEL received a rehearsed reading in London on January 8, 2017. Directed by Neil Sheppeck, any donations for the production went to the Red Crescent.

Laura Kipnis penned an article for vox.com on the sexual hypocrisy of the 2016 election.

Stephan Moore’s collaborative group A CANARY TORSI opened a piece, Performance|Portrait, in Brooklyn on December 3, 2016. The show is open through January 15. His collaborative group was also awarded a grant from NewMusicUSA for their upcoming triple-commission piece CAST/STAGE/AUTHOR. This group will also be performing their work in the Preston Bradley Hall at the Chicago Cultural Center in March 2017, as part of the OnEdge Festival put on by the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Moore has also become involved in a research project with a group based at RMIT in Melbourne, Australia, led by Dr. Jordan Lacey and Dr. Lawrence Harvey, both sound artists. They are working with the highway management company TransUrban to experiment with transformational, interactive sound design technology to mitigate and process the noise produced by highways that pass through residential neighborhoods. Their first round of experiments was completed in September, and they have field tests scheduled in Sydney and Melbourne in February and March. He has been named Lead Sound Designer on the project. He has been asked to perform in, and also curate the music for, the opening of the Merce Cunningham “Common Time” exhibition at the MCA on February 11 and 12.

Brett Neveu’s play HER AMERICA (formerly titled MISS AMERICA), starring veteran Chicago and Broadway actress Kate Buddeke and directed by Linda Gillum, will have its world premiere at The Greenhouse Theatre. HER AMERICA will play January 6 to February 12, 2017.


Ariel Rogers’ article “Constructing a Synchrofield” (translated into German as “Die Konstruktion eines ‘synchronen Feldes’”) was published in the German journal montage AV.

Ozge Samanci was invited to 16th Berlin Literature Festival (Internationales Literaturefestival Berlin) where she presented and gave workshops about her graphic novel-memoir Dare to Disappoint in September. She participated in a group exhibition in Istanbul titled Mindscapes with her drawings at Hall Arts Gallery from September 28 to October 16. This past June, she was a panelist on The Art of the Memoir: Amy Haimerl and Ozge Samanci in conversation with Bill Savage, at the Printers Row Literature Festival in Chicago.
FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED


J.P. Sniadecki has been nominated for the Herb Alpert Award in Film/Video, which is for “mid-career artists making challenging, exceptional work” (results in 2017). This past fall he was invited to give master classes at the Jean Rouch Film Festival in Paris, the Copenhagen Cinematheque, Arhus University, Universidade Lusófona de Lisboa, and Autonoma Universidad de Barcelona. In October he was also invited to screen his films and gave a talk at the Shenzhen Public Center for the Arts, as well as at Phenomenon Space, in Shenzhen, China. He was also a featured artist of Doc’s Kingdom seminar in Portugal along with Ana Vaz, Dominic Gagnon, and Kidlat Tahimik. This winter he will give the Fine Arts keynote address at Concordia University.

Ines Sommer’s film COUNT ME IN had a free screening at the Chicago Cultural Center. The film had its national television premiere on PBS’s World Channel followed by local airings on Chicago’s WTTW Channel 11.

David Tolchinsky’s short THE COMING OF AGE (writer/producer) was part of 2016 Chicago International Reel Shorts Festival and is currently a semi-finalist in the My Love, Michelle Short Film Festival. He was also the invited speaker at Lookingglass Theatre, discussing “Great Neurotics of Stage and Screen” as part of Lookingglass’ Reflect post-show series, on October 9, 2016.

Neil Verma gave a keynote at Radio Space is The Place, a radio art conference at Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg in Germany.

Calum Walter’s new film UNKNOWN HOURS will be in competition at the 2017 Slamdance Film Festival.

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

PHD in Screen Cultures

Screen Cultures hosted a workshop with Oguma Eiji on September 30, 2016. On September 29, Oguma’s documentary film TELL THE PRIME MINISTER was screened in Peggy Dow Helmerich Auditorium, at Annie May Swift Hall. The film documents the protests that occurred outside of the Japanese Prime Minister’s Office following the nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi reactors; these protests were not extensively reported by the Japanese media and thus went largely unnoticed by the world at the time.

MFA in Documentary Media

In September our second-year master’s students moved into their own editing suite in Annie May Swift Hall’s garden level. Thanks to all the folks around Northwestern who made it happen!

Ashley Brandon (Class of 2017), Luther Clement (Class of 2017) and Shuhan Fan (Class of 2016) were awarded ESPN/Tribeca Filmmaker Prizes to produce films that highlight issues of social importance through the lens of sports.

Mina Fitzpatrick’s (Class of 2017) documentary TWO TOGETHER screened at Kartemquin’s Fall Festival at Chicago’s ArtCenter Cinema. Her documentary short RUN OF SHORT was selected for Chicagoland Shorts Volume 2, which premiered at Facets on May 14th. The selected shorts will tour nationally and will be coming soon to VOD and Bluray.

Tim Fryett’s (Class of 2017) documentary OF A FEW DAYS played the Chicago International Film Festival. This continued the film’s success following screenings at the 45th New Directors/New Films at NYC’s Lincoln Center, the Ethnografilm Festival in Paris, and at AFI Docs. Fryett was profiled in the Chicago Tribune.
STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

MFA in Writing for Screen + Stage

Cat Davidson was interviewed for Emmy Magazine. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Ayad Akhtar visited with the MFA in Writing for Screen + Stage students. Associate Director Zayd Dohrn and MFA Director Dave Tolchinsky held an informal Q&A regarding his background as a writer and his experience as a playwright.

TV writer/executive Mimi Schapiro visited Dave Tolchinsky’s Foundations of Writing for the Screen+Stage class and listened to pitches by the first year MFAs.

Writer/director David Hollander, Northwestern alum and showrunner of Showtime’s Ray Donovan, visited and discussed writing for television with the MFA in Writing for Screen + Stage students and members of Zayd Dohrn’s dramatic pilot class. The event was co-moderated by MFA Director Dave Tolchinsky and MFA Associate Director Zayd Dohrn.

Northwestern University alums and TV Writers/Producers Nicole Snyder and Eric Charmelo shared advice about working in television as part of Northwestern University School of Communication EPICS Connection Speaker Series. The event was moderated by Brett Neveu.

MA in Sound Arts and Industries

From November 11 to 13, MA in Sound Arts and Industries students attended the Third Coast Conference in Chicago to connect with people in the radio and podcasting world and to learn practical advice from members in the industry.

On October 27, 2016 Steve Milton, founding partner of Listen (wearelisten.com), led a collaborative experiential workshop on sonic branding for students of the MA in Sound Arts and Industries and the MS in Engineering Design Innovation. The students explored a creative brief before breaking into groups to produce the “sound of Northwestern.”

On October 21, 2016 the MA in Sound Arts and Industries sponsored the inaugural meeting of The Great Lakes Association for Sound Studies (GLASS) in the Northwestern Soundstage. The meeting featured an address by James Lastra of the University of Chicago followed by thoughtful discussion. GLASS is designed to foster relationships and discussions between sound scholars in the Great Lakes region of North America.

Seven-time Academy Award-winning sound designer Gary Rydstrom returned to Northwestern on October 13, 2016 as part of the MA in Sound Arts and Industries Speaker Series to explore how movies have used sound to create emotion and tell stories throughout movie history. Rydstrom was previously featured in the program podcast episode released on January 29, 2016 and was the keynote speaker of the 2014 Sonic Boom Conference at Northwestern.

RTVF Undergraduate

The fifth annual First-Year Filmmaker festival took place this past fall. There were 49 first-year RTVF students actively involved, and 15 theatre first-year students, with help from URSA by providing a Set Parent for each team. The team of eight first-year producers worked with Erik Gernand over September to plan the event, held October 21-23, on campus.

First-year RTVF students were divided into seven teams and each team made a film in 48 hours over the weekend. On Friday they received three prompts: the word gobbledegook, the object vampire teeth, and the location of the bike racks across from AMS. The films were screened Sunday night in Annie May Swift.

The producers for First-Year Filmmaker 2016 were Alex Barnett, Katherine Liu, Jack Fay, Maddie Hong, Sarah Evans, Andrew McCabe, Scarlett Machson, and Caleb Negussie. The winner of the Audience Favorite Award was 14 DAYS by “Team 3,” which included RTVF members Andrew McCabe, Katherine Kearney, Finnegan Pilcher, Diego Abraham, Jacob Chaurize, Rachel Fimbianti, and Nathaniel Hoopes.
Northwestern University Women’s Filmmakers Alliance (NUWFA) successfully ran a second year of their “Wildcats in LA” alumni networking program and added “Wildcats in NY” to their summer programming roster as well. Events connect NU students in those two cities with alumni working in the industry for informational meetings and networking events.

Studio 22 and NUWFA organized “Grip Training” and “Roundtables” to introduce new students to the RTVF community and help prepare them for working on film sets at Northwestern. NUWFA also released an amazing zine outlining different film set positions and how they function at Northwestern.

Undergraduate films featured in festivals:

Marion Hill’s BIRD OF PREY premiered at SHOUT! at the Sidewalk Film Festival in Alabama, lead actress Clare Cooney was awarded Outstanding Acting.

Olivia Peace’s PANGAEA has screened at numerous festivals and was shown before an audience of 10,000 people during the Millennium Park Summer Film Series and was awarded “Best Experimental Film” at this year’s Reel Sisters of the Diaspora Film Festival & Lecture Series (amongst other awards).

Sam Spahn’s SQUARE KNOT is an official selection of Bucharest ShortCut Cinefest and was nominated for Best Student Film and Best Actor.

ALUMNI NEWS

Screen Cultures

Dr. Mabel Rosenheck was hired in the competitive intern program at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York where she will be working on the Andy Warhol Film Project.

MFA in Writing For Screen + Stage Alumni

The Araca Project selected two members of the Class of 2016 to produce their world-premiere plays in New York this fall. Kate Tucker Fahlsing’s play ACROSS THE PARK was directed by Maureen Monterubio and co-produced by Tucker Fahlsing. Mercedes Lake’s play TAUGHT was directed by Thomas Murphy and produced by Diana Losen, both 2016 alums. Both plays premiered in October at the American Theatre of Actors.

Nayna Agrawal (Class of 2015) was a Humanitas nominee and a Sundance Episodic Lab Finalist for her dramatic pilot about ineffective anti-trafficking initiatives in the Philippines. She is a 2016 fellow with LA theater East West Players. Her 2015 written nomination to CNN Heroes was selected as one of 10 winners from 5000 submissions and she is a semi-finalist for Berkeley Rep’s Ground Floor Lab and Joust Theatre (NYC) for Dharma.

Will Arbery (Class of 2015) received the Edes Prize and is a semifinalist for the 2017 P73 Playwriting Fellowship.

Farhan Arshad (Class of 2010) is a staff writer on Man with a Plan starring Matt LeBlanc, which was nominated for a People’s Choice Award for Favorite New TV Comedy.

Carrie Barrett’s (Class of 2009) short play GUTTED was selected for Actors Theatre of Louisville’s The Tens.

Rachel BuBose (Class of 2014) was named a 2017-2019 Tutterow Fellow at Chicago Dramatists.

Gabrielle Fulton (Class of 2010) was interviewed in American Theatre magazine about her play UPRISING.
Sarah Gubbins (Class of 2010) pilot I Love Dick, developed with Jill Soloway, has been picked up by Amazon for series premiering in 2017.

Jenny Hagel (Class of 2009) is a 2017 Writers Guild nominee for Comedy/Variety Series for her work on Late Night with Seth Meyers.

Stephanie Kornick (class of 2010) is a 2017 Writers Guild nominee for writing for Transparent.

Jenni Lamb (Class of 2012) was signed by The Robert A. Freedman Agency.

Diana Losen (Class of 2016) is an Academy Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting semi-finalist.

Marisha Mukerjee (Class of 2011) is a staff writer on Season 2 of ABC’s Quantico.

Philister Sidigu (Class of 2011) is the 2016-2017 Artist in Residence at Fehinty African Theater Ensemble (FATE).

Jen Spyra (Class of 2012) is a 2017 Writers Guild nominee for Comedy/Variety Series for her work on “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert.”

Mariana Tesch Morgon’s (Class of 2015) screenplay won first place at Guiões.

MFA in Documentary Media

Carlos Cova (Class of 2016) is now working with Kartemquin Films as a Post-Production Associate. Cova previously interned with Kartemquin in the summer of 2015. His thesis film FRAGMENTS played at the Chicago International Film Festival. The film took home honorable mention for the festival’s Chicago Award.

João Queiroga’s (Class of 2016) thesis film OUR SKIN had its US premiere at NewFest: The NYC LGBT Film Festival and its European premiere at Doclisboa’16 | Festas.

Deborah Libby’s (Class of 2016) thesis film WISE MEDICINE screened at the Awareness Film Festival in Los Angeles and at the World Ayahuasca Conference in Rio Branco, Brazil. Libby has also been serving as production assistant on the upcoming documentary YOURS IN SISTERHOOD and is currently assistant editing the documentary FANSPEAK [working title] about Chicago Cubs fans.

Jeseca Simmons (Class of 2016) screened her thesis film EMERALD ICE at her hometown film festival, California’s 5th Annual Watsonville Film Festival.

Qihui Wu’s (Class of 2016) film LIFE OF BEING WILD was recently picked up for distribution by GROUPE INTERVENTION VIDEO. Wu’s thesis film CHosen PEOPLE was an official selection at the Baltimore International Film Festival, the Athens Ethnographic Film Festival, the 2016 Block Film & Art Festival, the Chi-Town Multicultural Film Festival. CHosen PEOPLE won the Best Documentary Award at the Christian Film Festival.

RTVF Undergraduate Alumni

Harrison Atkins (Class of 2012) feature LACE CRATER premiered at Toronto Film Festival.

David Holstein (CWMP Class of 2005) is developing a comedy satire with Aasif Mandvi for Showtime titled Fatwa.

Miguel Jiron (Class of 2006) and Liz Moore (Class of 2015) are working at Sony Pictures Animation.

Zoe Pressman’s (Class of 2016) film THANKSGIVING GUEST had its Chicago premiere at Multicultural Film Festival on November 4 at Blue 1647.

Hannah Shapiro (Class of 2014) was on the latest season of SURVIVOR.

Aurin Squire (CWMP Class of 2001) is a 2017 Writers Guild nominee for the NBC series This Is Us, where he is a story editor.
UNBROKEN GLASS, a Kartemquin documentary co-produced by Documentary Media Program Assistant, R. Patrick Lile, premiered at the 10th Seattle South Asian Film Festival on October 22 and had it’s Chicago premiere on November 2, 2016 as part of the Kartemquin Fall Festival.

This is no laughing matter (or maybe it is): Students interested in comedy, please contact r-stack@northwestern.edu to discuss our new Comedy Arts module. Info can be found here: https://society.northwestern.edu/academic_module/comedy-arts

Mimi Shapiro visits with MFA Writing for Screen+Stage, Class of 2018
The Department of Radio/Television/Film
The School of Communication
Northwestern University

Located at 1920 Campus Drive, Evanston, IL 60208

David Tolchinsky: RTVF Chairperson, Director of MFA in Writing for the Screen + Stage
Zayd Dohrn: RTVF Associate Chairperson, Associate Director of MFA in Writing for the Screen + Stage
Roberta Stack: Director of Undergraduate Programs
Lynn Spigel: Director of the Screen Cultures Center
Debra Tolchinsky: Director of MFA in Documentary Media
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Miriam Joanna Petty: Director of Graduate Studies in Screen Cultures Program
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