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Cinematic Arts Newsletter

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IOWA

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Cinematic Arts**

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End-of-Year Zoom Party featuring Student Ambassadors, Faculty, Graduate Students, and Staff of Cinematic Arts

Letter from the Chair

Paula Amad

Dear Friends of Cinematic Arts,

When we launched this newsletter in the Summer of 2016 I would have never imagined I would be writing about a semester quite like the one that has just finished. The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed our lives, requiring the entire University of Iowa to shift to online teaching on March 30. The transition required endless patience, flexibility, creativity (and lots of Zoom sessions – see picture above of a departmental meeting), on the part of students, faculty and staff. But one thing it did not change was our commitment to excellence in teaching. I am very proud of our department's abundant dedication and compassion in meeting this ongoing challenge. But even before the pandemic arrived, we had a busy year in Cinematic Arts, including the launch of our new Screenwriting Major, another Exploring Careers in Cinema event, and a wealth of student and faculty achievements and awards (which you can read about further in this issue). The pandemic did not stop us from serving our students in innovative ways and with the generous support of alumni . . .

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Department of Cinematic Arts Colloquium: Charles Burnett

Hannah Bonner (PhD Candidate, Film Studies)

On Friday, November 1st, Department of Cinematic Arts' students and faculty gathered at FilmScene at the Chauncey for a Q&A with Academy Award winning director Charles Burnett, led by Christopher Harris, Head of Film and Video Production. During the Colloquium, which included a special screening of his short film *The Horse* (1973), Burnett discussed his time as a student at UCLA, his initial interest in photography, and his oeuvre, including his careful attention to music throughout his work. Soft-spoken and with a dry, erudite wit, Burnett reflected that the end of semester screenings at UCLA could be quite critical and therefore helped him develop a thick skin. But film school was also a wonderful opportunity for him to collaborate with other filmmakers and to learn the skills needed to develop his critically acclaimed films.

Killer of Sheep (1978) was Burnett's thesis film at UCLA. The film follows the quotidian life of a family in Watts, Los Angeles. Stan, the husband and father, works at a slaughterhouse. He's dejected and distant from his wife who struggles to win his affection and attention. As Burnett said in the colloquium regarding these characters, "they have to endure in order to survive." It's a heartbreaking drama reminiscent of Italian Neo-realist films such as Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thieves*. While Burnett would later go on to direct star-studded films such as *To Sleep With Anger* (1990) and *The Glass Shield* (1994), Burnett continues to gravitate towards films rooted in social-political issues infused with a deep humanity such as *Nightjohn* (1996) and his most recent documentary *Power to Heal: Medicare and the Civil Rights Revolution* (2018). The opportunity to hear about Burnett's illustrious career first-hand was an incredible opportunity for University of Iowa students and faculty in the heart of downtown Iowa City, the greatest small city for the arts.

Michael Moore Visits FilmScene

Thomas Jackson (PhD Candidate, Film Studies)

On January 30th, the department's Intro to Documentary Film and Non-Fiction MVP classes visited FilmScene at the Chauncey to attend a sold-out screening of Michael Moore's *"Where to Invade Next"*, followed by a live Q and A with the director himself. The event was also billed as a "worldwide virtual screening" as the film and Q and A were streamed live on Moore's Facebook page. The event was good-spirited and illuminating, and provided students studying the nuances of non-fiction filmmaking with the opportunity to engage with one of the most prolific, well-known, and controversial documentarians working today.

The audience, consisting both of students and the general public, were treated to a funny and subversive travelogue that follows Moore as he "invades" various European countries in order to steal various social, economic, and cultural policies that he believes would benefit the US. Moore pinches cafeteria lunch menus from France, labor rights from Italy and Germany, a tuition-free college system from Slovenia. A particularly striking moment occurs during Moore's visit to Norway, in which he finds a justice system that focuses on human dignity and rehabilitation. Here he interviews the father of a boy killed in the 2011 Utøya attacks. A poignant scene follows as the father displays absolute confidence in the Norwegian judicial system and is unwilling to wish harm on the attacker despite Moore's provocative line of questioning. The film contains all the tenets of Moore's satirical, often confrontational approach to documentary filmmaking, and was received well by those in attendance, who laughed and gasped in equal measure.

Moore also proved to be an open, engaging, and energetic interviewee during the post-screening Q and A. With the Caucus looming at the end of that week (the reason for the documentarian's presence in Iowa), Moore was keen to discuss the reasons for his endorsement of Bernie Sanders. But he also

took time to field both specific questions about documentary production and methodology, as well as broader inquiries about the state of the nation. Moore answered all questions with depth, passion and good humour and was riveting company throughout. The evening was a great success, and provoked engaging and intelligent discussions of different approaches to non-fiction filmmaking during subsequent class lectures.

Screenwriter Nick Meyer, UI Alum, Holds First Reading of Kinnick Biopic

Tyler Chalfant (Senior, Cinema)

Screenwriting and Cinema undergraduate students attended the first public reading of "Ironmen," a Nile Kinnick biopic, in October 2019. The ticketed event was held at FilmScene's Chauncey location, and featured a brief discussion and question-and-answer with producer Joe Heath and the film's screenwriter, UI alum Nicholas Meyer, along with staged readings of a few scenes from the legendary Hawkeye and Heisman Trophy-winner's life. UI theater student Kallen Glawe acted alongside Pamela Marie Hobby, R. Keith Harris, and Shane Graham, who Heath has chosen to play Kinnick in the film.

Following the event, some students were able to meet with Heath and Meyer to learn about the film industry and screenwriting process. Meyer's screenwriting credits include *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*, an adaptation of his own novel which won him an Academy Award nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay, and several films in the *Star Trek* franchise, which he also directed. The "Ironmen" event not only provided students with a chance to see some of Meyer's work read aloud, but also offered insights into the business side of filmmaking, and how the creative process is impacted as screenplays pass between multiple writers, as Meyer described to students changes he made to earlier drafts of "Ironmen," as well as his previous films.

Pandemic Movie Nights

Rachel Zingg (Senior, Cinema)

When the University of Iowa announced that it would be transitioning to online classes for the second half of the spring semester, many students were unsure of how they would remain connected to their friends, classmates, and professors during such unprecedented times. For Cinema students, this transition posed quite the challenge, as our department's coursework ordinarily thrives off of small-group film discussions, round-table workshops, and in-person screenings. Maintaining the department's tight-knit community of film lovers, makers, scholars, and writers was therefore not a question of "if," but "how." The department's team of student ambassadors, Noah Zahradnik, Kyleigh Davis, Rachel Zingg, and Hannah Olsson, set to work on devising a way to help Cinema students stay connected in this newly virtual world, all while watching some great films in the process.

Through the help of Netflix Party, a Google Chrome extension that allows groups of people to simultaneously watch and talk about Netflix films, we established the department's first-ever virtual movie night. Every Friday, a different faculty member served as our movie night host – selecting either their favorite movie on Netflix or one they had been dying to see and then leading a discussion of that film through the Netflix Party sidebar chat. Throughout our many weeks of movie nights, we watched classic films like *Minority Report*, new releases like *Dolemite is My Name*, and up-and-coming documentaries like *Shirkers*. Oftentimes, these virtual movie nights were followed by a Zoom call, in which the host and any interested attendees could discuss some of their favorite moments from the film face-to-face. Although the transition to online classes involved expected hardship and uncertainty for many, it turns out that even a global pandemic could not shake the strong community that students and faculty members have been built within the University of Iowa's Cinema Department. It was truly amazing to see how eager faculty members were to volunteer their time to this event and how many participants attended from all across the university and beyond. This impromptu movie night helped bring together students, friends, siblings, parents, professors, deans, and alumni every Friday night to enjoy some fantastic films, engage in heated film debates, and feel connected to a larger community.



Cinema as a Time-Travelling Machine

Samuel Cox (Senior, Cinema)

The history of cinema is a rich one that goes far beyond the images on the silver screen. Just as important as the actors in front of the camera or the filmmakers behind it is the audience seeing those films and the spaces in which they are viewing them. This was the primary focus of Professor Paula Amad's Spring 2020 undergraduate cap-stone seminar, *Moviegoing Histories*. Over the course of 15 weeks, students went on a unique journey through the silent cinema period, learning about a wide variety of



subjects such as the audiences that were often made up of different ethnic backgrounds and social classes, the venues that would show these early silent films and how they were tailored for their audiences, while also being exposed to the silent films that these audiences were seeing. On top of that, students were treated to some once in a lifetime ex-

periences, including a trip to Special Collections in the Main Library to view F.W. Brinton's (one of the earliest exhibitors of film in the state of Iowa) personal belongings, getting a personal viewing of silent films and lantern shows from Mike Zahs (the collector who has done so much to save and promote Brinton's legacy), and going to the State Historical Society Research Center in downtown Iowa City to find the communities that Brinton visited. *Moviegoing Histories* also had a personal side to it as students interviewed older friends and family about their moviegoing experiences, allowing the rare opportunity for one's personal life to become one with learning.



COVID-19 shook everything up, including the Spring 2020 semester. But that did not stop Professor Amad from making *Moviegoing Histories* an impactful course. With the landscape of cinema changing every single day, it was very important for students to learn just a small fraction of this history that is often overlooked. With this course, students were also able to reflect on their own moviegoing experiences through interviewing friends and family. Those interviews will live on forever, making sure that this rich history of cinema's unique impact upon the personal and collective formation of American identity formation is not forgotten. The Spring 2020 semester was a memorable one, and *Moviegoing Histories* will certainly live on in the memories of the lucky twenty-five students that attended class each week. *Moviegoing Histories* provided many unforgettable experiences and left students with a curiosity for the forgotten histories of cinema.

Merritt Tierce Offers Short Form Screenwriting Students Advice

Shakira del Toro (*Junior, Cinema*)

On November 5, 2019, my short form screenwriting class engaged in a special Skype session with screenwriter and novelist, Merritt Tierce. Merritt Tierce had a very unique journey into the entertainment industry. She graduated from the Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa, while maintaining two server jobs in Texas over the weekends. She published the award-winning novel *Love Me Back*, and at first, she only focused on writing novels. She attended a creative retreat where she met Jenji Kohan, the program creator for the show *Orange is the New Black* (OTNB). With a simple letter to Jenji after the retreat, accompanied by her novel, Merritt planted the first seed into her screenwriting journey. Working hard and participating in that retreat earned her a spot on her first Netflix series.

Merritt provided very insightful perspectives and advice into the screenwriting career. She believes that building a character is more important in screenwriting than in writing a novel. She also admits that language is a small part of screenwriting; plot and characterization are the most important. For aspiring screenwriters, it is crucial to build a dynamic background and to participate in a bunch of activities. Merritt was an abortion activist and an outsider

compared to the rest of the screenwriting team for OTNB, but she believes that that is how she earned the job. Merritt Tierce revealed the process of being a screenwriter for OTNB, and it was very different than what I expected. The writers sat in the "writers' room," where they brainstormed an outline for each episode. Merritt described her job as getting paid to laugh in a room full of talented writers, which is something that I found very motivating. Next, one of the writers was randomly assigned to write the episode they were all working on, and the writer created the script on their own with the ideas they came up with as a team. The individual writer was then flown to the production set and had a say in the production of that episode. This writer was the voice for the rest of the team. I really enjoyed the idea of that because as a cinema minor, I want to be part of every aspect of putting on a show.

Being a screenwriter is a collaborate effort. Always try to be in dialogue with someone. You can learn to be a screenwriter. Merritt never imagined herself as a screenwriter; she didn't think she had the right skills for it. However, she learned. Researching, reading, being open-minded, and just talking to people strengthens your ability of becoming a great screenwriter and anyone has a chance in this industry if you are willing to put in the work.



Careers in Cinema Symposium

Kyleigh Davis (*Junior, Cinema*)

The Adler Journalism Building buzzed with anticipation this past March when the Department of Cinematic Arts proudly hosted Academy Award winner and producer **Mark Johnson** (*The Notebook*, *Rain Man*), screenwriters **Scott Beck** and **Bryan Woods** (*A Quiet Place*, *Haunt*), President and Executive Producer of SRH marketing, **Matt Sabljak**, and **EJ Philby** of Produce Iowa.

As notable alums of Iowa, each was eager to outline their path from the University of Iowa classroom to the entertainment industry while sharing any expertise and advice picked up along the way. EJ Philby started the program with a slideshow on Produce Iowa's rich involvement in Iowa cinema, including information on how to apply for filmmaking grants through their website.

The uncertainty about the future that lies with most young professionals pre and post-graduation was alleviated as Scott Beck and Bryan Woods described feeling similarly just years earlier. The pair went on to tell small anecdotes about the time spent between writing, always emphasizing the importance of diligence in an ever-evolving industry like Cinema. Their writing process, according to the duo, consists of rewriting and revising hundreds of times — ideas shifting drastically between each script handoff. It's okay to not get everything right the first try or in the first year, they say. The pair highlight patience and collaboration as keys to developing a successful process and want any aspiring filmmakers to rest assured that their time will come.

When Academy Award winner and producer Mark Johnson appeared on screen following the dynamic duo of Beck and Woods, students couldn't wait to ask him about breaking into the industry. From 'How many internships should I have?' To 'Should I Make a LinkedIn?', Johnson answered with ease. The producer, similarly to Beck and Woods, emphasized that everyone's time will come. He tells students how he went from production assistant to executive producer while making sure to leave them with this important sentiment: seeing every level of job in the industry is incredibly valuable — slow and steady will win the race.

President and Executive Producer of SRH marketing Matt Sabljak ended the day by telling students this: he's looking to hire people that want to learn, that have a passion and curiosity for what they're doing. Like the others before him, he highlights uncertainty and the growth that stems from uncertainty as nearly key in finding later success. With a room full of students entering the work force in the near future, it's nice to know that uncertainty is normal, warranted even. But uncertainty often catalyzes hard work and growth — a necessary step to take in becoming your best professional self. Many students left feeling assuaged, having some of their most pressing questions answered and having the opportunity to connect and network with popular industry names. The Adler Journalism Building buzzed once again with even more anticipation as it began to empty, each student hopeful for their own path from Iowa classroom to the film industry.



The 17th Annual Iowa City International Documentary Film Festival (ICDOCS), usually hosted in various venues around Iowa City, was successfully live-streamed from April 30-May 2 due to the national health crisis.

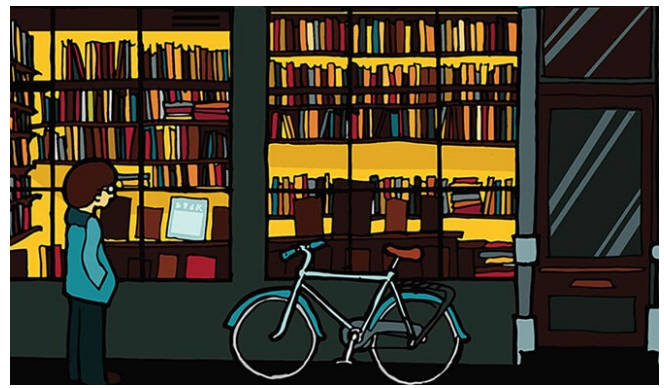
Festival Director and Department of Cinematic Arts Head of Film & Video Production at the University of Iowa, Christopher Harris and third year MFA student Michael Wawzenek worked tirelessly to move the festival online, which saw a significant international online audience. For more information on the jurors and festival schedule, please see this [article](#) by Film Studies PhD candidate Hannah Bonner featured in Little Village Magazine. For winners and a full list of the programming, please visit the [ICDOCS website](#).

Poet & Filmmaker Lauren Haldeman Class Visit

Mya Geiger (Sophomore, Nursing)

In Fall 2019 The Art of Smartphone Filmmaking class was fortunate to have writer and film-maker Lauren Haldeman come in to speak about her work. Haldeman is the author of multiple books, including *Instead of Dying*, *Calenday*, and *The Eccentricity is Zero*. She also filmed “Seventeen Powers of Visitation,” “The Size,” and “We are in a Forest.” In addition to these works, Haldeman does many of her own illustrations. Haldeman, a graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop, spoke to this class about her publications, graduate school, and about her life. She said that for the first year after her daughter was born, she wrote one page a day and by pulling from this, she was able to publish an entire book. Haldeman also spoke about the glorification of the “starving artist lifestyle” and the impact of alcohol and drugs on creativity. She claims that she has been the most successful as an artist since she has been sober. Children can sometimes be regarded as a career-ender, but Haldeman has found differently. In fact, her daughter is featured in many of her filmed or recorded works. In regard to the Iowa Writers’ program, Haldeman claims that the most beneficial part of this program was the connections she was able to build. She emphasized that art can be very lonely, writing is often done alone, filming and editing are sometimes done alone, and the Iowa Writers’ program introduced her to individuals that make this process much less so.

The Art of Smartphone Filmmaking is a general education class offered through the Cinema department. It is a small class made of a wide variety of majors—Engineering, Communications, Nursing, among many others. Most of these students are not allotted the same level of creativity as offered in this course, nor are they frequently exposed to interactive guest speakers such as Lauren Haldeman. The students in this class were able to learn about art that they may not have heard of otherwise, in addition to meeting one of the phenomenal artists studied in this course.



Lauren Haldeman's "Jealous", a poetry comic featured in *The Rumpus*



James Giovannetti Shares Steps to Success for Aspiring Screenwriters

Adrian Enzastiga (Sophomore, Cinema)

On February 17, James Giovannetti, an alum of Cinematic Arts, visited our Foundations of Screenwriting course on an impromptu visit back to Iowa City. It was a great experience, as he has worked in the filmmaking industry for years, having worked on iconic films such as *The Breakfast Club*, *Sixteen Candles*, and *Home Alone*. He is currently working as the first assistant director on *Chicago Fire*.

Giovannetti told us about some key differences between television and “features” production. He explained that in television the writers have all the power, while in features, the director takes the reins and says goodbye to the writers. In network television, the director is a guest. Writing for television is a lot faster; you prep for eight days and shoot for eight days. Here, you might have two or three takes, but filming for a feature might surpass forty takes for one scene.

The class got a bit of insight into what goes on in television production, as Giovannetti described the logistics of the *Chicago Fire* production. As an assistant director, part of his job is to go through the script and break it down into “movie magic”. He works on the budget, determining the cost of each scene, stunt, etc, and creating a production schedule. When an episode is over budget, it is the writer’s

job to cut back. Giovannetti explained that you can’t just reduce the length of the script; you need to figure out how to remove whole locations or sets in a way that does not compromise the story.

One student asked how to “make it” in the film industry. Giovannetti said, “you just need that one time in!” The people with more experience, of course, are going to be hired first, but what happens when everyone is booked? That’s when they call the ones with no experience.

Another student asked about the best way of getting a script picked up by a studio. Giovannetti suggested going through a producer rather than a big studio. A studio might not be willing to trust a script from an inexperienced writer, but if you can get the attention of a well-known producer or director, then they will pitch it to the studio for you. One problem with pitching your script to a director is that they may not want to look at it for fear of it influencing a future project of theirs or being sued for “copying” your project after it was rejected. For this, he suggested getting your script copyrighted and finding an agent. The agent sends the script to the director’s agent, who then reads it and decides if it is worth the director’s interest, which eliminates the problem of potentially stealing another artist’s work.

At the end of class, Giovannetti listed three steps for a successful writing career in film or television: 1) Write! 2) Watch films. 3) See how things are done (production).

Overall this was a great experience for an introductory screenwriting student. We learned some differences between features and television, and how to start a successful career in screenwriting.



Kim and her husband Clark Bender (a 1989 MA in film studies) visiting the UI campus in November

UI Film Studies Graduate Reignites a Fund to Honor the Late James McLaughlin

Tyler Strand, UI Center For Advancement

Some of Kim Kerbis' ('89 MA) most profound family memories stem from the movie theater. She remembers learning about racism alongside her father and sister at the Billie Holiday biopic *Lady Sings the Blues* and experiencing the family drama depicted in *The Godfather Part II* while seated next to her mother and sister. Cinema also rekindles memories of one of her great friends, James McLaughlin, a fellow UI film student who affected the lives of many during his decade on campus before succumbing to an illness on March 11, 1995. The Staten Island, New York, native became well-known at Iowa for his insightful commentary, big laugh, and large Sunday bagel breakfast gatherings he hosted at his 11 North Dodge Street apartment.

McLaughlin made such an impression on Kerbis—and so many more of his UI colleagues—that she recently made a generous donation to the University of Iowa in his name. Her gift revived a memorial scholarship fund she and other classmates created after McLaughlin's death. Now, thanks to Kerbis' generosity, the James McLaughlin Memorial Fund will provide annual awards to graduate students in the UI's Department of Cinematic Arts.

"Everyone knew who Jim was, even if you weren't in the film department or the communication studies building," says Kerbis. "He was an iconic member of the Iowa City community and personified a high level of academic scholarship." Kerbis jumpstarted the fund with a \$100,000 contribution and will match the first \$25,000 in gifts made to the fund, which will assist graduate students with professional development opportunities, such as funding for travel and seminars.

Kerbis, a Chicago native, first met McLaughlin in a small graduate seminar covering Italian cinema and chatted him up outside Prairie Lights bookstore. A Sunday edition of *The New York Times* tucked under McLaughlin's arm served as an icebreaker as the two connected over their big city backgrounds and love for film. "He was very smart, opinionated, and a little different from your average Iowa City bear," says Kerbis. "He kind of gave me permission to be me and not be afraid of being different."

McLaughlin inspired that mindset by being himself—a unique New Yorker and true intellectual who attracted others anytime he stepped into a room. He never owned a driver's license, walked most everywhere, and would strike up a conversation with just about anyone. Pursuing a PhD in film studies, McLaughlin also taught many film courses during his time at Iowa and made an impression on various cohorts of students, including Shari Zeck ('84 MA, '06 PhD), who became one of his best friends. "Jim cared so deeply about the serious study of culture," says Zeck. "Kim's gift to honor his memory and help others travel and further their own studies of cinema is a terrific testament to the legacy he left all of us who knew him."

2020 Winners of The Michael D. Harmeyer Scholarship

Andrew Owens (Lecturer, Film Studies)

The Michael D. Harmeyer Scholarship was established in 2014 by Charles and Cecelia Harmeyer in honor of their son, Michael D. Harmeyer. Michael graduated from the University of Iowa in 2010 with a major in communication studies and a minor in cinema. After graduation, Michael moved to New York City to pursue a career in screenwriting. For 2020, the Harmeyer Scholarship is being awarded to two outstanding undergraduate filmmakers: Abigail Laird, for her film *rooms*, and Hannah Olsson, for her film *Just Tom Sharpe*.



Still image from Hannah Olsson's *Just Tom Sharpe*



Still image from *rooms* by Abigail Laird

In *rooms*, Abbey Laird interweaves text from a poem by Charlotte Mews and 16mm footage filmed in a single room. In images filled with texture, shadow and golden light, the piece uses careful editing and composition to build a mood that's compelling and contemplative. In addition to her work sample, the award committee was impressed by the filmmaker's commitment to keep exploring the medium of 16mm film, as well as her participation in Iowa City's cinema community.

In *Just Tom Sharpe*, Hannah Olsson continues her work on documenting "the familiar stranger" by introducing viewers to the poet-turned-horse farmer, Tom Sharpe. As Tom reads his own verse through introductory voice over, Olsson's camera deftly interrogates the details of horse farming and cowboy culture: ropes, saddles, boots, and spurs shot in an aptly-toned warm palette are juxtaposed with the more introspective insights of a man reflecting upon the twilight of his life. This film is a fitting example of the mature and nuanced work of a young filmmaker who continues to set herself apart as one of the brightest stars at UI.

Undergraduate Student Accomplishments

- **Shannon Mulligan**, senior undergraduate in cinematic arts, had her film *Cordelia* screen at the 2019 Muscatine Independent Film Festival. It had all UIowa Cinematic Arts students as cast and crew and won Best Student Film.
- **Landon Walsh**, senior undergraduate in cinematic arts, had his film *The Honey War* screen at the 2019 Muscatine Independent Film Festival. It won Best Micro-Short. Walsh's film *Hardwood Bowls and a Robust Lathe* screen at the 2020 Julian Dubuque Film Festival.
- Several students in the Cinematic Arts department worked as production assistants on the feature filmed in Iowa called *East of Middle West* in August 2019, including: **Kai Swanson** (script supervisor, post-production producer) **Ben Palmer** (2nd AC), **Marissa Sill** (Assistant Props), **Jade Peterson** (Office Manager), **Kaya Schafer** (actress), PAs: **Tony Hopp**, **Jack Oliver**, **Jake Salter**, **Robert Kessler**, **Megan Nagorzanski**.
- **Ben Palmer** was a 1st AC and **Kai Swanson** was a boom operator on a Netflix optioned pilot called *Prey* that filmed in Dyersville, Iowa.
- **Jack (John M) Howard**, a double major in Cinema and English/Creative Writing (expected degree, May 2020), was awarded a US Teaching Assistantship at Austrian Secondary Schools (USTA) for 2020-2021.
- **Viltė Vaitkutė**, a 2019 graduate with a double major in Cinema and Spanish, has been named an alternate for a Fulbright research grant to Lithuania to complete her documentary film, "Defining Lithuanian," in partnership with Unnecessary Films in Vilnius.
- *#millcore* and *#millcore2* debuted in January and March of 2020 on Amazon Prime. Both seasons of the web series were written, directed, and produced by UIowa 2019 graduate **Kai Swanson**. *#millcore2* was filmed in Iowa City, IA and a majority of the cast and crew were UIowa undergraduate and graduate students including: **Yanglin Ma**, **Teagan Perrin**, **Jack Howard**, **John Smith**, **John Ver Mulm**, **Billy Hoffman**, **Brendan Higgins**, **Philip Rabalais**, **Stephen Banigan**, **Chris Hutton**, **Maeve Schmitt**, **Da'Shawne Smiley**, **Jacob Guenther**, and **Alix Moad**.

Graduate Student Accomplishments

Film Studies

- **Alex Denison** was an Obermann Public Scholar for the Humanities for the Public Good program in Summer 2019, and has been awarded a Graduate College Summer 2020 Fellowship
- **Matthew Hips** held a Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship in Fall 2019, and his Dissertation Prospectus was approved earlier this semester.
- **Thomas Jackson** passed his Comprehensive Exams in Fall and his Dissertation Prospectus was approved this semester; he has also been awarded a Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship for Fall 2020
- **DJ Kime** passed his MA exams at the start of this semester, and has been accepted into the Film Studies PhD program at the University of Iowa.
- **Victoria Le-Sweatman** passed her MA exams at the start of this semester, and has been accepted into the Communication and Media Studies PhD program at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
- **Juana New** has been working on her dissertation with the support of a Marcus Bach Fellowship for Spring 2020, and has been awarded a Graduate College 2020 Summer Fellowship.
- **Chris Wei** is completing copyediting work as co-editor and co-author on a book *Mormonism and the Movies* tentatively set to be published later this year.

Film & Video Production

- **Trevon Coleman**: Festival of Cinematic, Audio & Visual Experimentation, Minneapolis. Service: Department of Theatre Arts, University of Iowa, Recruitment Video Production ICDOCS pre-screening
- **Auden Lincoln-Vogel**: Slamdance Film Festival; Black Nights Film Festival, Estonia; Premiers Plans Film Festival, France; Whoa Ha Ka Oaxaca Film Festival Mexico; Fredrikstad Animation Festival, Norway; Winner of Festival "Cine En Corto" in San Luis Potosi, Mexico; Winner of "Student Kino Fest" in Riga, Latvia; Special Jury Mention at "Black Nights Film Festival" in Tallinn, Estonia
- **Philip Rabalais**: Tacoma Film Festival; SSA /CutLog at the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, Scotland; IPTV's Film Lounge; Slamdance Film Festival; Cosmic Rays Film Festival. Service: ICDOCS prescreener
- **Julianna Villarosa**: Slamdance Film Festival; Cucalorus Film Festival; 2019 Tallgrass Residency Group Exhibition; Whoa Ha Ka Oaxaca FilmFest, Oaxaca, Mexico solo screening, mamafilm, Wichita, KS; 4th Independent Film Tour MX, Monterrey, Mexico; Dallas Medianale, Dallas, TX; Chicago Underground Film Festival; Stray Cat Film Center, Kansas City, MO; The Orphan Film Symposium, Eye Filmmuseum & NYU, Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Tallgrass Artist Symposium, Mariana Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Manhattan, KS; Semi-finalist, The Student Academy Awards; Tallgrass Artist Residency, Matfield Green, KS; Nominee: Best Student Documentary, Thin Line Festival, Dallas, TX
- **Stephen Wardell**: Festival of Cinematic, Audio & Visual Experimentation, Minneapolis; Moving Image Research Centre, London; 5lzero Festival, Canterbury, UK; Save the Archives Film Festival, Milwaukee; Walker's Point Center for the Arts, Milwaukee
- **Michael Wawzenek**: Montreal Underground Film Festival' Winnipeg Underground Film Festival; Festival ECRĂ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Festival de Cine Experimental de Bogotá, CineAutopsia in Bogotá, Colombia; Festival of Cinematic, Audio & Visual Experimentation, Minneapolis; discussion panel at Walker Art Center, CAVE Festival, Minneapolis; Accepted to screen at Onion City Film Festival, Chicago; 2019 MFA Summer Fellowship, UIowa Graduate College. Programming: Co-leader, Vertical Cinema; Program Director for ICDOCS
- **Hao Zhou**: 16x16x16; series of group exhibitions; University of Iowa, University of Kansas; University of Nebraska; and Metropolitan College; Festival of Cinematic, Audio & Visual Experimentation, Minneapolis; Future Life Festival, Hangzhou, China; ShanghaiPRIDE Art & Photography Exhibition; Berlin International Film Festival, Berlin, Germany; film screening at *Panorama 40*, panel, and Queer Summit participation. *Film & History* Conference, Madison, WI. Accepted abstract at London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, (De)Constructing Narrative Identities Conference. Grand Prize (\$150) for Best Overall Photo, University of Iowa International Program Photo Contest

Faculty Accomplishments

- **Paula Amad** published an article titled “ ‘The World’s Heavy Gaze’: Recovering Cin-aereality in the Post-War Avant-Gardes” in the journal *Modernism/Modernity* (Spring 2020).
- **Corey Creekmur** has been elected Second Vice President of The Comics Studies Society (CSS), which he helped found as the first scholarly group in the U.S. devoted to comics. This is in fact a four-year commitment, leading to being President of the group in two years.
- **Anahita Ghazvinizadeh**’s short and feature films were screened in international venues and festivals including participating in the “Iranienness en Courts” program at Cinéma Star in Strasbourg, France ; a retrospective of works at Rash Cinematheque of Contemporary Art and Film in Iran, and Roze Filmdagen in Netherlands.
- **Chris Goetz**’s book manuscript, *The Counterfeit Coin: Videogames and Fantasies of Empowerment*, has been selected for a Book Ends award from the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies and the Office of the Vice President for Research.
- **Chris Harris** earned a fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University for 2020-2021
- **Nellie Kluz** received a Fall 2019 AHI award for her in-progress film and in January 2020 she worked as a cameraperson for an upcoming HBO documentary series, “How to With John Wilson.”
- **Anna Morrison** published poems in *Prairie Schooner* and will have a suite of poems featured in *West Branch* literary magazine in the Summer 2020 print issue, edited by G.C. Waldrep.
- **Kathleen Newman** organized a workshop on “Latin American and Latinx Cinema in the Time of Streaming Television and Resurgent Authoritarianism,” for the 2020 Society for Cinema and Media Studies conference.
- **Andy Owens**’s book *Desire After Dark: Contemporary Queer Culture and Occultly Marvelous Media* is now in production at Indiana UP and has an official release date: March 2, 2021.
- **Steve Ungar** was awarded 2 of the UI’s most prestigious accolades: the UI Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Humanities Research Award for 2020 offered by the UI Office of the Vice President for Research Recognizing Research and Innovation Excellence, and, the University of Iowa Michael J. Brody Award for Faculty Excellence in Service for 2020.

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Kim Kerbis and Clark Bender we also converted the Iowa City Documentary Film Festival into a fully online experience. The end of the year is also a time for goodbyes and welcomes. While we are all sad to be bidding adieu to Professor Steven Ungar after 44 years of distinguished service at the University of Iowa, we are also pleased to announce that we will be welcoming in Fall 2020 a new colleague, Professor Michael Cowan, who is an award-winning specialist in German cinema and who will be the new Chair of Cinematic Arts come Spring 2021. When I look back on all we have accomplished since issue #1 of the CAN, I am honored to be a part of the Cinematic Arts team and although times are difficult I am also excited for what the future will bring for our department. However, as this newsletter goes to press, our community is profoundly saddened and shaken by the recent violent evidence of systemic racism in our society and our department pledges to return to campus with a reinvigorated commitment to combating racism and all forms of discrimination and oppression. I hope that in this unsettling period of distancing, uncertainty, and outrage at racial injustices you are all finding a semblance of community and inspiration through cinema.

Wishing everyone health and wellness for the Summer ahead.

Best,



Paula Amad
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Cinematic Arts



Department of
Cinematic Arts

"Our Time Together Seemed Brief, but Love of Cinema is Forever. Congratulations, Class of 2020"



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