Dear Friends of the Department of Cinematic Arts,

Welcome to our CAN issue #4 for Summer 2019. It is a pleasure and an honor to share some highlights of the past year. We are a department proud to commit and promote cinema as an innovative art form and field of inquiry that makes us think, feel, and act like no other medium can. Supplementing our core mission of research and teaching, we hosted a rich array of provocative talks and film screenings by artists, industry professionals, and scholars.

In August 2018, we welcomed two new faculty colleagues: Assistant Professor Anahita Gazvinizadeh and Lecturer Andrew Owens. Anahita is a filmmaker and screenwriter whose works have been screened at Cannes, the most prestigious film festival in the world. Andrew’s teaching and research center on race, gender, and sexuality. A book project in completion, Desire After Dark: Contemporary Queer Culture and Occultly Marvelous Media, is forthcoming from Indiana University Press. Nellie Kluz, a digital filmmaker who joined our faculty as a Lecturer in January 2019, has been the recipient of the Princess Grace Film Award and a Rooftop Films Short Film Grant. In 2017, Kluz was named one of Filmmaker Magazine’s “25 Faces of Independent Film.”

We are especially pleased to report the following awards earned by our undergraduate and graduate students: Among our Film Studies Ph.D. candidates, Anu Thapa has been awarded a CLAS Dissertation Writing Fellowship; Juana New has been awarded a Marcus Bach Graduate Fellowship; and Matt Hipps has been awarded a Graduate College Post-Comprehensive Research Fellowship. Hannah Bonner and Alex Denison were named summer interns in the Humanities for the Public Good Mellon grant administered through the Obermann Center for Advanced Studies and the UI Graduate College. Among our Film & Video Production M.F.A. candidates, Michael Wawzenek has been awarded a Graduate College MFA Summer Fellowship; Julianna Villarosa has been awarded a Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio Summer Fellowship; and Sam Kahrar has been awarded a Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio Summer Fellowship.

Our undergraduate major, Adrian Sandersfeld, is this year’s winner of the Harmeyer Award. And we have three students graduating with honors: Aaron Longoria, Jess Roy, and Vilte Vaitkute. Michael Wiggin is graduating with screenwriting honors.

Among our Cinematic Arts Colloquium hosted a rich schedule of events, including works by award-winning filmmakers, playwrights, performance and visual artists, scholars, and even undergraduate majors. We hope you enjoy reading the issue. And, as always, please feel free to contact me with any feedback or suggestions. Wishing everyone a great summer!
The Department of Cinematic Arts Colloquium Series
Experimental Cinema, Performance, and Scholarship
The 2018/2019 Cinematic Arts Colloquium
Chris Goetz, Assistant Professor of Film Studies

The Cinematic Arts Colloquium, a speaker series hosted by the Department of Cinematic Arts, invites participants from related disciplines and artistic practices to come and share their work with our passionate intellectual and creative community. This past year, the speaker series featured filmmakers, performance and visual artists, poets, scholars, and even undergraduate filmmakers.

The Colloquium began in October with former Cinematic Arts graduate and award-winning filmmaker, Irina Patkanian who delivered a joint presentation with playwright and UIowa professor Lisa Schlesinger. Following a screening of Patkanian’s stop-motion animation film (Little Fiel), Patkanian and Schlesinger discussed their documentary film opera IPHIGENIA POINT BLANK, written by Schlesinger and directed by Marion Schoevaert. The film opera debuted the following month on UIowa’s campus.

In November, multi-modal performance artist TJ Dedeaux-Norris screened her film, Bye, Tameka! The highly self-reflexive and performative piece led to a lively Q&A. But it was the final Colloquium of the semester later that month with Christopher-Rasheem McMillan that really got the audience out of their seats. McMillan performed a choreographed dance and urged the audience to change their locations and document his performance, which was followed by a brief presentation and discussion of the aesthetics and ideology of performance. Norris and McMillan are both faculty at UI.

The spring Colloquium series began with a presentation by Deborah Whaley, artist, curator, poet and Professor of American Studies, African American Studies, and Senior Scholar of Digital Arts and Humanities for the Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio at UI. Her presentation, Polynoir Amour, explored the struggle for what Whaley terms affective citizenship in Love Jones and Friday Foster.

Shortly before spring break, the second colloquium event was a special presentation of creative and scholarly work by UI undergraduate students (Sal Goedken, Tristen Kopp, Nate Kouri and Aaron Longoria) with Hannah Bonner as moderator. The Bijou Film Board helped promote and select films for this event.

And finally, the series concluded with two strong back-to-back presentations. First, filmmaker, screenwriter, and Assistant Professor in Cinematic Arts, Anahita Ghazvinizadeh, presented her “childhood trilogy” of short (award winning) films. Second, sound poet, vocalist, theorist and visiting Professor in Iowa’s renowned Writer’s Workshop, Tracie Morris, performed a poetic reinterpretation of Kubrick’s last film, Eyes Wide Shut.

The Cinematic Arts Colloquium will return again next year and is free and open to the public. If you would like to be emailed about upcoming speakers, please contact Assistant Professor Christopher Goetz (christopher-goetz@uiowa.edu)
Wow! Three Years of Vertical Cinema!
Michael Wawzenek, MFA Graduate Student

Wow! Three years of Vertical Cinema! If you don’t already know, Vertical Cinema is a graduate student organization run by Cinematic Arts MFAs that exhibits experimental motion pictures in Iowa City. This past fall we screened a mammoth 16mm print of Nathaniel Dorsky’s *Arboretum Cycle* (2017) which, with its 137 minute silent runtime, alternately enthralled and frustrated attendees. In spring we partnered with the Bijou Film Board in showing two films by Deborah Stratman: *In Order Not To Be Here* (2002) and *O'er The Land* (2009) at FilmScene as a part of Women’s March, and we sponsored James N. Kienitz Wilkins’ ICDOCS juror screening of *Common Carrier* (2017) in April.

We were also thrilled to host visiting filmmakers Akosua Adoma Owusu in February and Jennifer Reeves in April. They each screened shorts programs of their works, participated in Q&As, and conducted studio visits with MFA students in the department. Jennifer Reeves’ screening took place in collaboration with the Craft Critique Culture Conference whose theme this year was, “Speaking of Violence...”. We are extremely grateful to all those who made these events possible: the Department of Cinematic Arts, Graduate and Professional Student Government, Craft Critique Culture Conference, Bijou Film Board, ICDOCS, and especially the CSIL Grant Funding Program, who provided partial funding for almost all of our events this year!

Vertical Cinema would also like to offer a heartfelt thanks to Kai Swanson and Traci Hercher for all the work they put into being co-leaders this past year and wish them the best post-graduation! Additional thanks to Mike Gibisser for being our faculty advisor and Auden Lincoln-Vogel for making event posters! See you next year!

The Iowa City International Documentary Film Festival Returns
Mike Gibisser, Assistant Professor of Film & Video Production and ICDOCS Festival Director

The latest edition of the Iowa City International Documentary Film Festival (ICDOCS), continued to expand its scope, showcasing 47 films in eight competitive programs, culled from over 750 submissions, a record for the festival, now in its 16th year. Organized, programmed, and run by an undergraduate class in the Department of Cinematic Arts, the festival presents new and recent work that both complicates and expands upon conventional approaches to nonfiction and documentary film.

In addition to the eight competitive programs, featuring work from over 13 countries, the festival presented screenings by two visiting jurors, including Dessane Lopez Cassell, who has recently held curatorial positions at the Museum of Modern Art and Flaherty NYC, and James N. Kienitz Wilkins, a filmmaker who has presented work at Berlinale, the International Film Festival Rotterdam, and the Whitney Biennial. Also showcased, in collaboration with the Bijou Film Board, was the work of Cinematic Arts alumnus, Laura Iancu, who presented a program of recent animations and non-fiction work.

Festival winners, as determined by the jurors, included the films *Civil War Surveillance Poems Part One* by Mitch McCabe, *The Air of the Earth in Your Lungs* by Ross Meckfessel, and *Lyndale* by Oliverio Rodriguez and Victoria Stob. Honorable mentions for the festival went to *Life After Love* by Zachary Epcar and *Fucked Like a Star* by Stefani Saintonge. For the first time, an audience award was presented at the festival; but instead of an award presented to a film voted the best by the audience, an award was given from the festival to a deserving audience member. The *Perfect Attendance Award* was given to current Film Studies PhD candidate, Alex Denison.

In another first for the festival this year, ICDOCS began paying filmmakers for presenting their work. Made possible by a sponsorship campaign—led by recently graduated Cinematic Arts student, Tristen Ives—ICDOCS became one of only a handful of US festivals taking this important step to pay artists for their labor by offering screening fees to filmmakers.

ICDOCS will return for its 17th iteration Spring of 2020. Additional information can be found on the festival website: [https://icdocs.wordpress.com/](https://icdocs.wordpress.com/).
Experimental animator, Jodie Mack, visited in February to present her first amongst others. Kevin Jerome Everson, Basma Alsharif, and Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, oppressive grammar.” The program featured work by Stephanie Barber, language despite the power structures that manifest themselves through external realities, perception and politics, and the expressive possibilities of Livingston’s words, “traversed geography and history, interior states and together programmer and former Cinematic Arts lecturer, Jason Livingston, who put together Catching Z’s at the End of Language, a screening which, in Livingston’s words, “traversed geography and history, interior states and external realities, perception and politics, and the expressive possibilities of language despite the power structures that manifest themselves through oppressive grammar.” The program featured work by Stephanie Barber, Kevin Jerome Everson, Basma Alsharif, and Beatriz Santiago Muñoz, amongst others.

Experimental animator, Jodie Mack, visited in February to present her first feature, The Grand Bizarre, which premiered at the 2018 Locarno Film Festival and went on to screen around the world to rapturous acclaim.

With jaunty rhythms and an exuberant palette, the film weaves together 5 years of footage collected across several countries in dazzling lines of flight. By the end of the film’s sixty vertiginous minutes, viewers arrive at a surprising and surprisingly affecting conclusion that’s touched upon issues of globalization, ethnography, labor, capital, joy and spectacle.

Next up, and with a heavy heart, Headroom presented the work of filmmaker Jonathan Schwartz, a filmmaker, teacher, and source of inspiration for all his friends and students, who tragically passed away in October 2018. Jonathan incorporated found and collected materials in many of his films, and simultaneously developed his unique 16mm vision through intimate exchanges with his subjects, handheld gestures, in-camera superimpositions, and a profound attention to the transient qualities of the world around us.

Rounding out the season, filmmaker Melika Bass presented a program of her trademark slow-burning and speculative fictions that deconstruct the familiar to reveal narrative worlds organized by their own habits, rituals, and codes. Headroom was thrilled to collaborate with the School of Art and Art History to bring Melika, recently named one of Filmmaker Magazine’s “25 New Faces of Independent Film 2018,” to Iowa City.

Programming for the Headroom Screening Series resumes in early fall 2019.

**Strong Presence for UI Graduate Students at University of Toronto Cinema Studies Conference**

**Eli Boonin-Vail, Film Studies MA Student**

Early in the Spring semester of 2019, PhD student Thomas Jackson and Master’s candidate Eli Boonin-Vail traveled North to Toronto to participate in the University of Toronto’s eighth annual graduate student conference, hosted by that university’s Cinema Studies Institute. Also in attendance was Iowa MFA candidate Kai Swanson, who further represented the unity between film scholarship and practice in our department with their support and presence. Participating alongside graduate scholars from New York University, University of Chicago, Yale University, and a variety of Canadian institutions, Jackson and Boonin-Vail represented Iowa by presenting papers that both engaged with the work of renowned Soviet filmmaker and film theorist Sergei Eisenstein.

This shared engagement with Eisenstein proved highly productive, as the conference’s keynote speaker was none other than the University of Maryland’s Luka Arsenjuk, a prominent contemporary Eisenstein scholar whose 2018 book *Movement, Action, Image, Montage: Sergei Eisenstein and the Cinema in Crisis* formed a core component of the previous semester’s seminar in classical film theory taught by Corey Creekmur. Arsenjuk’s book had informed both Boonin-Vail and Jackson’s own work, and the conference presented a unique opportunity for scholarly engagement with an influential figure in the field. Arsenjuk attended both Boonin-Vail and Jackson’s panels, referring to Boonin-Vail’s paper in his keynote address and posing thoughtful questions to Jackson.

Friday, January 25th kicked off the two-day conference with an opening panel that featured Boonin-Vail’s “The Revolting Image: Eisenstein’s Queer Desiring Forms,” a presentation that sought to connect our present-day knowledge of Sergei Eisenstein’s queer identity to his theoretical formulations, rather than simply his film practice as has previously been explored. On the 26th, Jackson presented a paper entitled “Tracing a Lineage: Eisenstein and contemporary non-fiction animation,” which sought to seek out theoretical connections between Eisensteinian form-based approaches to theory with the uses of animation within documentary.

Boonin-Vail, Jackson and Swanson were warmly welcomed by their receptive Toronto hosts, and found time outside of the conference to explore the city and foster useful professional connections with other students and faculty.
2018-2019 Faculty Accomplishments

The following is an abbreviated list of faculty achievements for the year:

Associate Professor Paula Amad presented the Keynote Lecture at the University of Chicago’s 15th annual graduate student conference of the Department of Cinema and Media Studies, titled “Documenting the Archive.”

Associate Professor Corey Creekmur has completed editing the sixth book in the Comics Culture series for Rutgers University Press. This entry is already the best-selling title in the series. Professor Creekmur is also cited and quoted in a recent issue of *The New Yorker.*

Assistant Professor Ananita Ghazvinizadeh recently published a short story, “The Black Ladder” in Saan Literary Quarterly in Persien. Professor Ghazvinizadeh also recently received a Cinereach Fellowship (for directors at critical junctures of their career) from the Cinereach Institute in New York over 2018-2019.

Assistant Professor Mike Gibisser’s film Travel Stop received an honorable mention at last year’s Milwaukee Underground Film Festival and a jury award at the Florida Experimental Film Festival. Professor Gibisser also received an Obermann Interdisciplinary Research Grant and Residency for a collaborative project with filmmaker Mary Helena Clark.

Assistant Professor Christopher Goetz recently published two articles, “Coin of Another Realm: Gaming’s Queer Economy” in *Game Studies: The International Journal of Computer Game Research,* and “The Fantasy That Never Takes Place: Nostalgic Travel in Videogames” in the game studies journal *Loading...*

Associate Professor Christopher Harris recently had a solo screening of his work at the 2019 Images Festival in Toronto, Canada. He presented his film *Speaking in Tongues* as a lecture-performance at the 2019 Essay Film Festival in London, UK. And he was invited to screen still/here at the 2019 Locarno Film Festival in Switzerland as part of their Black Light Retrospective, a program dedicated to international Black cinemas.

Visiting Lecturer Nellie Kluz’s film, *Serpents and Doves,* screened at the European Media Art Festival in Osnabrück, Germany this past April. In addition, her film, “Organized Activities” was recently featured in a solo screening at Uniondocs Center for Documentary Art in Brooklyn, NY.

In addition to presenting work at major professional conferences such as SCMS and LASA, Professor Kathleen Newman was keynote speaker at the symposium “Against Deglobalisation: The Enduring cultural Formation of Global Literature and Global Cinema” at university College London.

Instructional Track Lecturer, Andrew Owens, published a journal article in *New Review of Film & Television Studies* as well as two chapters in edited collections now in press (one at Edinburgh University Press and one at University of Wales Press).


2018-2019 Film and Video Production Graduate Student Accomplishments

Traci Hercher (MFA student) Screenings at: Filmfront in Chicago, Revolutions per Minute Festival in Boston, MA; Northampton Film Festival; SEFF Binghamton; Unseen Festival in Denver, CO; Milwaukee Underground Film Festival. Conference presentations at: Craft, Critique, Culture Conference, University of Iowa; Poetics and Politics Conference, University of California Santa Cruz. Awards and residencies: Non-fiction shorts prize at Northampton Film Festival; Ayatana Biophony Artists’ Research Residency

Sam Kahrar (MFA student) Screenings at: Film Front in Chicago. Awards: Iowa Arts Fellowship 2018; Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio Fellowship, 2019

Sam Kessie (MFA student) Screenings at: Women’s March, Iowa City; Filmfront in Chicago; Breaking Ground Contemporay Dance Festival, Tempe Arizona; Experimental Film Festival, Seattle, WA; Dance on Camera Festival, NY. Awards: Graduate Diversity Fellowship for the summer 2018, $2500 preproduction for thesis film; GSS/Graduate College/OVPR Research Grants – Art, Humanities & Social Sciences, $995, makeup/sets design costs.

Auden Lincoln-Vogel (MFA Student) Screenings at: Unseen Film Festival, Denver; WNDX Festival, Winnepeg; SEFF Binghamton; Film Front, Chicago. Awards: International Competition for Intermedia Artwork (Intermedia Artwork Concept), Krakow, Poland.

Philip Rabalais (MFA Student) Screenings at: Chicago Underground Film Festival; Austin Arthouse Film Festival; Sunday Shorts Film Festival; Dimetrale Experimental Film Festival, Onion City Experimental Film and Video Festival, SEFF Binghamton; Winnipeg Underground Film Festival. Awards: GSS/Graduate College/OVPR Research Grants – Art, Humanities & Social Sciences, $2000 for production of thesis film.

Kai Swanson (MFA student) Screenings at: Miami Filmfront, Chicago Conference presentations at: University of Toronto, Fluidity: Cinema Studies Institute 2019 Graduate Conference; University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Artifice: 2019 Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Conference

Julianna Villarosa (MFA student) Screenings at: Filmfront, Chicago; Women’s March, Filmscene, Iowa City; Indie Grits Film Festival, SC; Atlanta Film Festival, GA; Thin Line Festival, TX; Athens International Film and Video Festival, OH; Chicago Underground Film Festival, IL. Awards and Residencies: Iowa Arts Fellowship 2018; Digital Scholarship and Publishing Studio Fellowship, 2019; Tallgrass Artist Residency 2019, Kansas

Michael Wawzenek (MFA student) Screenings at: Festival des cinémas différents et expérimentaux de Paris; Filmfront, Chicago; Process Festival, Riga Latvia; Onion City Film and Video Festival, Chicago, IL; Stray Cat Microcinema, Kansas City Missouri. Awards: MFA Summer Fellowship, Ullowa Graduate College, Summer 2019.

2018-2019 Film Studies Graduate Student Accomplishments

Hannah Bonner (PhD candidate) has screened her video work at festivals, participated in three academic conferences (including SCMS and Visible Evidence), and had one article accepted for publication while another is under review: she also continues to publish essays and poetry in a range of venues. In January 2019 she was awarded an Obermann Center Graduate Student Fellowship, and an Obermann / Humanities for the Public Good Summer 2019 Internship with The Englert Theatre for the position of Community Participation Researcher. She also served on the Women’s March committee for FilmScene.

Eli Boonin-Vail (graduating MA student) presented at three conferences this academic year, including at the Society for Animation Studies (where he earned the Emru Townsend Award), the Cinema Studies Institute Graduate Conference in Toronto, and SCMS. He also has an essay under review at *Links: The Journal of Comics Studies.* A video essay he made with Kai Swanson has been exhibited at two conferences, in Milwaukee and Iowa City.

Alex Denison (PhD candidate) presented at the Literature and Film Association Conference in New Orleans. He was awarded a Summer 2018 Fellowship and a Fall 2018 Post-Comprehensive Research Award from the Graduate College, both for dissertation research.

Matthew Hips (PhD candidate) presented at the SCMS conference in March this year. He also has a book review forthcoming in the journal *Animation,* and has been awarded a Post-Comprehensive Research Award to conduct dissertation research next year.

(cont’d, p. 6)
Tom Jackson (PhD candidate) presented at two conferences this year, at the Literature/Film Association Conference in New Orleans in Fall, and the University of Toronto Cinema Studies Annual Graduate Conference in Spring.

Jonathan Lack (PhD candidate) presented on the film *A Wrinkle in Time* at a conference at San Francisco State University in October.

Victoria Le-Sweatman (MA student) presented at a graduate conference in Berkeley in February and at Columbia University last month; she also participated in a Woman’s March panel at FilmScene in March.

Juana New Gavidia (PhD candidate) was awarded the prestigious Marcus Bach Fellowship for Spring 2020 as well as the Grad College award for submitting an external grant and completed an article for a volume on Latin American cinema: she also presented her work at a national conference.

Amos Stailey-Young (PhD candidate) conducted research with the support of a College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Dissertation Writing Fellowship last year and presented work derived from his dissertation at the SCMS conference in March.

Anu Thapa (PhD candidate) was awarded the prestigious College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Dissertation Completion Fellowship for Summer and Fall 2019 as well as an Anne Cleary Award for archival research in India and a Graduate College award for submitting an external grant; as well as international and national conference presentation.

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Future Filmmakers Visit Campus, Meet with Cinematic Arts Students and Faculty

Chris Goetz, Assistant Professor of Film Studies

This past April, the Department of Cinematic Arts proudly hosted the winners of the movie trailer contest at Bettendorf Middle School. Now in its fourth year at the school, the contest offers students a chance to creatively practice what they’ve learned in social studies and language arts.

Each of roughly 150 eighth-graders at Bettendorf Middle School wrote, assembled and mixed their own movie trailers for fictional films about real people whose stories are not well known. The trailers’ diverse topics range from unsung heroes who rescued Jewish children during the Holocaust to first responders in New York City during September 11th.

Earlier this year, Cinematic Arts’ Stephen Wardell (MFA graduate student) and Tristen Kopp (graduating undergraduate senior) shared advice for the middle schoolers and subsequently judged the trailer entries across a range of categories (e.g., “best character,” “best use of audio,” etc.). The winners—a group of about 12 students—were accompanied by several of their teachers to campus in early April.

During the visit, the middle school students and teachers met with the DEO of Cinematic Arts, Steven Ungar, received a tour of our department’s production and classroom facilities with Angela Looney, ate lunch and visited with current undergraduate majors in the Cinematic Arts program, sat in on a class taught by our production lecturer and filmmaker, Nellie Kluz, and finally screened a selection of recent films by undergraduate majors. After the screening, the students and their teachers participated in a brief discussion about the films with Assistant Professor Chris Goetz.

This event represents an important mission for the department of Cinematic Arts concerning engagement with Iowa communities. It was made possible with the assistance of Leslie Finer and the Office of Outreach & Engagement. Special thanks to Jacquie Albrecht for helping to organize and coordinate logistics.

Michael D. Harmeyer Scholarship Award Winner

Made possible by a generous gift to the department, the Michael D. Harmeyer Scholarship is awarded annually to deserving undergraduate students who are majors in Cinematic Arts. To apply, students must submit a personal statement as well as a sample of what they consider their strongest work, with two options: an essay or a short visual production sample.

Congratulations to this year’s winner: Adrian Sandersfeld.

The following is a description of the winning submission:

Adrian Sandersfeld’s short film, *Gender Euphoria*, is a layered and intimate celebration of loving oneself and living outside of the binary. Visually exploring empty public spaces and using subtle editing structures—moving from night to day, and from winter, through summer to fall—Sandersfeld creates an absorbing portrait of change and self acceptance through the eyes of a filmmaker “unapologetically trans and queer.”

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Make a Gift at this link: [https://www.givetoiowa.org/2018CA01](https://www.givetoiowa.org/2018CA01)

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