

SUMMER/FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER

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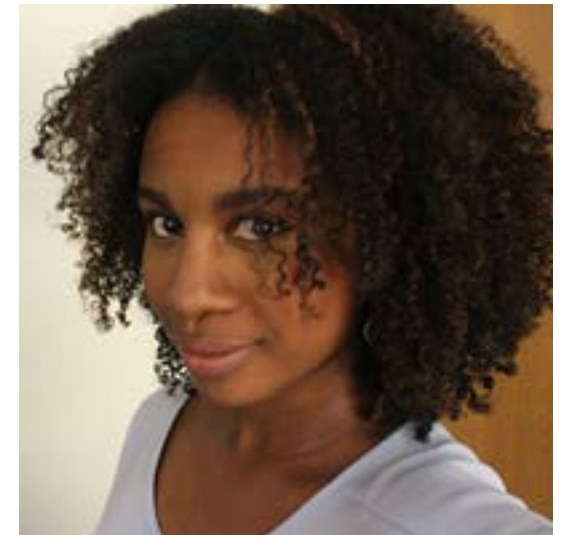
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Rising second year **Naeema Torres** won a [Career Development Grant](#) from the American Association of University Women. Torres is also the recipient of the Time Warner Foundation's Next Generation Grant and The Jane and Michael Hoffman Foundation Fellowship.

[From the Northwestern website:](#) "The Office of Fellowships is pleased to announce that Naeema Jamilah Torres (TGS, Documentary Media) and Aisha Motlani (TGS, Art History) have each won financial support from the American Association of University Women (AAUW)! Naeema received a Career Development Grant to fund her filmmaking, and Aisha received the American Fellowship to fund the final year of her PhD program.

Naeema arrived at Northwestern with a wealth of professional experience. After graduating with a BFA in media and communication arts, film and video production from the City College of New York, Naeema worked for several years in film distribution. Northwestern's MFA in documentary media represents a return to Naeema's creative roots in storytelling. Using documentary as a blueprint, she aims to tell unapologetic stories about urban life, complex ethnic identities, and womanhood. She is currently developing her thesis film on the legacy of the largest slave rebellion in US history, to be completed in 2019.

In addition to the Career Development Grant, Naeema is a recipient of the Time Warner Foundation's Next Generation Grant, the Jane and Michael Hoffman Foundation Fellowship, and the Graduate Research Grant, furnished by Northwestern's Graduate School. When not hard at work behind the camera, Naeema volunteers with the Foster Care Film and Community Engagement Project, working on outreach and distribution of their award-winning documentary series about foster care youth."



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Patrick Wimp, who will be teaching Writing the TV Pilot (sophomore priority) as an adjunct this fall, is an award-winning writer and producer based in Chicago. His life experiences as a bi-racial person have built a creative voice that speaks in many forms, and embraces nuance in social class and ethnicity. Patrick's work celebrates outcasts and he is fascinated by the endless complexity of human identity.

Patrick is the co-founder of the Chicago-based production company Digital Hydra. Through his company, Pat has written, shot, and produced international TV series, independent films, digital series, TV pilots, and commercial work for major brands like Nike, Facebook, and McDonalds. His work has screened on international networks as well as cable and VOD platforms, including Comcast and Amazon.

Pat has made films in Europe, the Middle East, and all across the United States. Patrick's works has exhibited and been awarded at the Chicago International TV Festival, New York Television Festival, Cannes International Short Film Corner, and dozens of other festivals around the globe. In 2017, Pat was awarded Best Writer at SeriesFest Season 3 and Best of Fest at the HBO sponsored International Television Festival, for his work as the writer and co-creator of the indie TV pilot, "Public Housing Unit." Pat was also named to the 2018 Reel Chicago Blacklist – a celebration of innovative African-American filmmakers in Chicago.



Zayd Dohrn is the new chair of the RTVF department for the 2018-2019 academic year. **Dave Tolchinsky** is stepping down as chair of the department after an 11-year tenure. Tolchinsky and Dohrn will be co-directors of the MFA in Writing for the Screen and Stage program. **Deb Tolchinsky** will be the new Associate Chair of the department. **Mimi White** is the acting director of the Screen Cultures program in 2018-2019, **Miriam Petty** will be returning as Director of Graduate Studies in 2019-2020. **Kyle Henry** will be the Interim Director of the MFA in Documentary Media.

Associate Professor and Interim Director of the MFA in Documentary Media program **Kyle Henry's** fiction feature film *Rogers Park* finished touring to over twenty North American theaters with a 100% Fresh rating on the website Rotten Tomatoes. A *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* critics pick, the film's distribution will be the subject of a feature article in the Fall issue of *Filmmaker Magazine*. The film is available now on all streaming services and will be available for free on Amazon Prime starting Oct 1st. He will serve as a jurist and will be speaking on a panel about distribution at this year's Chicago Int'l Film Festival.

We say goodbye to Doc Media lecturer **J. Christian Jensen**. Jensen will be pursuing other full-time directing opportunities and departed Northwestern and Chicago at the end of this Spring quarter.

Director and writer **Todd Solondz** came to campus in May to discuss his films in [the 35th Annual Van Zelst Lecture](#), pictured here with Radio/Television/Film Chair **David Tolchinsky** and RTVF Associate Professor **Thomas Bradshaw**.

Lecturer **Brett Neveu** was presented with the [Galbut Outstanding Faculty Award](#) by the School of Communication in June.



Spencer Parson's film *Alpha Waved* played at the Chicago Underground Film Festival as part of the Shorts Program 2.

Associate Professor **Miriam Petty** was appointed as a [Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence](#), the University's highest teaching honor. The recipients received their awards at an installation ceremony on Thursday, May 24th, in the Guild Lounge in Scott Hall on the Evanston campus.

Creature Companion, a film co-produced by RTVF Chair **David Tolchinsky** and Block Museum Associate Director of Exhibits Dan Silverstein and directed by former RTF lecturer **Melika Bass**, won [Special Mention of the International Jury at the Oberhausen Film Festival](#). The film had its US premiere at [BAMcinemaFest, Brooklyn Academy of Music](#), on June 30, 2018. His upcoming play, *An Attempt to Heal in the Contemporary World*, [premieres at FringeNYC](#) this October, with Tolchinsky directing. His play *Where's the Rest of Me?* was produced at [The Road Theatre Company's Summer Playwrights Festival 9](#), and an [interview with him appeared on their website](#).

In May, **Ines Sommer's** *It Is No Secret*, premiered on WTTW Channel 11. The commissioned documentary tells the story of Chicago's Reverend Clay Evans. Using oral history interviews and a wealth of archival materials, the documentary paints an engaging portrait of Rev. Clay Evans, an important Chicago faith and Civil Rights leader, award-winning Gospel Music artist, and trailblazer in broadcast ministry.

Associate Chair of RTVF and Associate Professor, **Debra Tolchinsky**, continues production on *True Memories and Other Falsehoods* (TMOF), a feature-length documentary concerning contaminated memory and false internalized belief in relation to criminal justice. Debra is directing/producing, and the film is in development with Kartemquin Films, which recently had two documentaries in contention for Oscars. Currently, (as of this writing) TMOF is a finalist for a Roy W. Dean Spring 2018 Grant.

Julia Louis-Dreyfus, a friend of the department, a former MFA writer panel panelist, and a co-sponsor (with husband and fellow NU alumnus **Brad Hall**) of our sitcom initiative/Comedy Arts module, will be receiving the illustrious [Mark Twain Prize for American Humor](#) on October 21.

NOTE: Bios and information for our incoming MA in Sound Arts & Industries students will be available after September 23. Contact sound@northwestern.edu for information which we will include in our next issue.

Northwestern

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

Department of Radio/Television/Film

UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

Congratulations to **Hillary Bachelder** (Class of 2012) and her documentary film [Represent](#) for being named a Fork Films 2018 Documentary Grant Recipient. Bachelder's film tells the stories of women stepping up for the first time to run for local office across the Midwest.



New Heads of Student Groups for 2018-2019

Applause for a Cause - Production team, feature films
Producers

Jonathan David & Josh Jacobs

CatToonz - Production board, animation focus
Presidents

Kiki Meiners-Rios & Juliana Iturralde

MultiCulti - Production board, PoC focus
Presidents

Sarah Goodman & Maria Valencia

Niteskool - Production team, music
President

Erica Bank

NSTV - Production team, sketch comedy
Producers

Jen Schonberger & Meghan Harshaw

NUWFA - Production board, feminist focus
Presidents

Jody Baillet & Lucinda Mandel

Studio 22 - Production board
Executive Chairs

Tyler Gould & Megan Ballew

URSA - Community board
Chairs

Madeline Hertz & Maddie Hong

PHD IN SCREEN CULTURES NEWS

Screen Cultures Director, **Miriam Petty**, was honored on May 24, 2018, for her appointment as a McCormick Professor of Teaching Excellence, the university's highest teaching honor. RTVF Chair David Tolchinsky, along with Professor Petty's family and friends, were in attendance to celebrate her achievement. During her acceptance, Professor Petty shared that she came from a long line of teachers and felt privileged to honor her family's legacy.

Whitney Pow has been awarded a 2018-19 Presidential Fellowship. This highly selective award is the most prestigious fellowship award for Northwestern graduate students, and less than 15% of nominated students are appointed to the Fellowship.

Roger Almendarez defended his dissertation, *Representational Scales: Latinx Media Production in Chicago, 1953-2012*.

Annie Sullivan defended her dissertation, *Between Rebellion and Ruin: Local Documentary, Civic Infrastructure, and the Manufacture of Black Futures in Detroit, 1967-1977*. She was awarded her PhD during the 2018 commencement ceremonies. Annie will be teaching RTVF 398 "Visions of the City: Chicago" this fall in the RTVF department.

Hannah Spaulding defended her dissertation, *Reinventing Television and Family Life, 1960-1990*. She has received a postdoctoral 2-year fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (a Canadian government funded postdoc). She will be working at The Media History Research Center at Concordia University.

Lauren Herold won a competitive yearlong TAsip in NU's Gender & Sexuality Studies Program. Over the 2018-19 academic year, she will TA for professors Jennifer Nash and Helen Thompson, and teach her own standalone course on "Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Media Activism."



Chuck Kleinhans (1942-2017), Associate Professor Emeritus of the department of Radio-Television-Film, was honored at this year's Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference in Toronto, Canada. Screen Cultures Director, **Miriam Petty** hosted a party in Professor Kleinhans' name that drew in former colleagues, students, and professional connections from across the world.

The Kleinhans Essay Prize Selection Committee awarded **Claire Jeeyoung Pak** the inaugural Chuck Kleinhans Essay Prize. Claire was awarded a \$250 cash prize at this year's SoC Honors Convocation for her essay "Globalization, Hybridity and Digital Creatures," a creative, detailed, and thoughtful analysis of Bong Joon-ho's 2017 film *Okja*.

In addition, an honorable mention went to sophomore **Tuuli Sandvold** for her outstanding and meticulously researched essay "Hattie McDaniel in the White Press: The Myth of the "Mammy.""

The Chuck Kleinhans Essay Prize was so named to honor Chuck Kleinhans (1942-2017), Associate Professor Emeritus of the department of Radio-Television-Film, in which he served for nearly thirty years. Professor Kleinhans was an exceptional teacher and scholar who championed the intersectional, the interdisciplinary, and the independent in filmmaking as well as film studies. He wrote and researched voraciously about a plethora of subjects including melodrama, the films of the L.A. Rebellion, working class Hollywood heroes, and the aesthetics and politics of pornography. He also made his own experimental and documentary films and co-founded the influential film studies journal JUMP CUT with his life partner Julia Lesage in 1974. By taking JUMP CUT to a free online format in 2001, Chuck and Julia served as pioneers of the contemporary open-access scholarship movement.

MFA IN DOCUMENTARY MEDIA NEWS

Associate Professor **Kyle Henry**'s fiction feature film *Rogers Park* finished touring to over twenty North American theaters with a 100% Fresh rating on the website Rotten Tomatoes. A New York Times and Los Angeles Times critics pick, the film's distribution will be the subject of a feature article in the Fall issue of Filmmaker Magazine. The film is available now on all streaming services and will be available for free on Amazon Prime starting Oct 1st. He will serve as a jurist and will be speaking on a panel about distribution at this year's Chicago Int'l Film Festival.

Professor **J.P. Sniadecki**'s film *EL MAR LA MAR* has continued screening in theaters around the US and the globe, most notably with a run at Gene Siskel Film Center, at the Taiwan International Documentary Festival where it earned a Jury Award, and at the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) in London, where it garnered another review in The Guardian (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/aug/05/el-mar-la-mar-reviews-sonoran-desert-us-mexico-border>). It was also exhibited as a multi-channel installation for the first time at the ICA and is being acquired by the MoMA for its permanent collection. Three of his other features, *DEMOLITION*, *PEOPLE'S PARK*, and *YUMEN*, are also being acquired for the MoMA's permanent collection.

Faculty member **Marco Williams** and Mentorship Board Member/RTVF MFA in Production alumna **Tan Pin Pin** were inducted into the [Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences](#).



Left: **Rogers Park**



Right: **EL MAR LA MAR**

MFA IN WRITING FOR THE SCREEN+STAGE NEWS

Class of 2015's **Nayna Agrawal** is a 2018 Sesame Street Writer's Room Fellow and was awarded a development deal. Her TV pilot "American Pia" was recognized at the NY TV Festival. She received a full scholarship to attend the Kenyon Playwrights' Conference. She has two play readings in New York later this year.

Rising second year **Dolores Diaz** was accepted to the Fornes Playwriting Workshop through the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies in June. Her full-length play, *Man of the People*, will be produced in October with Three Cat Productions in Chicago.

Class of 2017's **Cat Davidson** is working as a Post Production Assistant on the show *Love Is*_____, which airs Tuesdays at 10pm/9pm CST on OWN.

Class of 2018's **Ellie Goodman** is a finalist for [The HUMANITAS Prize's David and Lynn Angell College Comedy Fellowship](#), the winner of which will be announced in February 2019.

Alumnae **Jenny Hagel** (2009) and **Jen Spyra** (2012) both [received Emmy nominations](#) for their work on Late Night with Seth Meyers and The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, respectively.

Alumna **Sofya Weitz** was chosen as a [Jerome Fellow](#) for the upcoming year at the Minneapolis-based Playwrights Center.

MFA alumna and staff member **Hope Rehak** performed at [the 7th Annual Chicago Women's Funny Festival](#) on Sunday, August 26.

Alumnus **Lars Steier** was [spotlighted](#) by The Graduate School in July 2018.

Only Real Cougars, a play by alumnus **Tony Werner**, was produced at [The Road Theatre's Summer Playwrights Festival 9](#) on August 2.



MASTERS IN SOUND ARTS & INDUSTRIES NEWS

Many Sound Arts and Industries graduate students spent their summers at internship sites across the country including NFL Films, Utopic, Comma Music, Electrical Audio, Periscope Post and Audio, Ravinia, Artist Partner Group, and Noisefloor.

Other Sound Arts and Industries students spent their summer researching topics like Sonic Trends in Human/Computer Representations in Music, Film, and Game Media, The Relationship Between Sound, Text and performance in Electro Acoustic Theatre, and African American Oral History and Podcasting Community Future.

Sound Designer and Class of '18 student **Conor Lannan** worked on the film "Thymes" for his capstone project and it won Best Student Film at the AROUND International Film Festival in Barcelona.

Pavan Vasdev, Class of '18 student, turned his summer internship into a full-time gig as a Director of A&R and Strategy at Saavn in New York City. Learn more about Northwestern Sound Arts and Industries student Pavan Vasdev — his love for music and how his Study in Sound project inspired his music startup by visiting [the blog](#).

[It's Electric! Behind Sam Clapp's Summer Internship](#): This summer we've caught up with Northwestern University Sound Arts and Industries students to talk about their summer internships — from how they landed



them to what they hope to learn.

[A Hitchhiker's Guide to Sound Arts and Industries](#): Student Brendan Monte gives his tips on taking advantage of the time in the one-year master's program.

[Getting to Know Brendan Monte](#): We're getting to know some of Northwestern's Sound Arts & Industries students — from their motivations, experiences, coursework and post-grad dreams — we're asking questions and getting answers!

[In India, Streaming Offers an Alternative to the Brand Partnership Model](#): Where the West Sprouted a thriving infrastructure of labels, distributors, A&R networks, and an IP regulatory system, India relied on an archaic and unregulated model: artist-film partnerships.

[The Art of the Podcast](#): In this episode we conclude our series on radio producer Sarah Geis' course, The Art of the Podcast. Listen as Sound Arts and Industries student Julia Ferguson guides us on the quarter-long journey through the course that led her and her classmates to explore the medium of audio storytelling.

[R Take](#): Listen as students Jason Foley, Lauren Kriel, and Erin Watt explore the question of cultural identity in this Radiolab-inspired piece that examines the popularity of DNA ancestry testing kits.

NEW FACES: ADJUNCT FACULTY

Niv Klainer is a writer-director who specializes in narrative films. His first feature film, *BENA*, had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2009 and his first live action short, *MR. KURZWEIL IS DEAD*, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2006. He is currently working on a feature film, *SAINT PETE*, a comedy based on his short *DON'T THINK ABOUT IT*. Since its premiere in December 2016, this short has been selected for more than 50 festivals and received 13 awards.

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 Obleck, and has taught playwriting and related subjects at the University of Chicago, Columbia College, and Northwestern University. 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.

Geoff Rice is an 18-year veteran of the Chicago theatre, sketch, and teaching-artist world. His artistic home is with Barrel of Monkeys, a company that improvises and adapts CPS students' short stories for the stage. His work as an actor has been seen at most of Chicago's leading stages as well as numerous top regional theatres. Geoff is a graduate of Northwestern's School of Speech ('99) and holds a Musical Theatre Certificate. Go Cats.

Annie Sullivan studies the history of filmmaking in Detroit, alongside questions of race and urban development. Her main research interests include archival media, industrial and sponsored film, local media practice, and visual representations of urban space. She has presented her work at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual conference. Before beginning the PhD program at Northwestern, Annie received her BA from the University of Michigan and an MA in Film Studies from the University of Iowa. She is an RTVF Screen Cultures PhD graduate.



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. In 2006 she worked with her husband Joe Swanberg to create and direct the Chicago-based web series *Young American Bodies*. 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). Her third feature *Unexpected* premiered in competition at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. Swanberg is currently teaching The Improvised Comedy Web Series.

Karly-Lynne Scott is a PhD candidate in the Screen Cultures program at Northwestern University and an assistant editor of *World Picture*. Her research focuses on issues pertaining to the representation of the body on screen, with an emphasis on gender, sexuality, illness and disability, as well as authenticity and ethics in media performance. Her work has appeared in *Porn Studies*, *World Picture*, *Sounding Out!* and *In Media Res*.

Meredith Zielke is a documentary filmmaker, cinematographer and editor, whose work offers multiply situated interpretations of social systems, body and conflict. She works mainly in experimental features and large scale installation. Meredith has worked on a number of socially critical film projects: from labor history, social control, and futurist UFO cults in Brazil ("A Machine to Live In"), to explorations of somatic memory and crypto-Judaic identities in Mexico City ("The Jettisoned"), hybridized healing practices in the Northern Andes ("La Curación"), juvenile life without parole sentencing ("Natural Life"), race relations, law enforcement and criminal justice reform in Chicago ("Present Absence"), juvenile life without parole sentencing ("Natural Life"), and reconciliation through Jewish and Arab dialogue ("Zeitouna: Refusing to be Enemies"). Meredith also worked in public radio, having been a Chicago producer at StoryCorps and WBEZ's Vocolo 89FM. Her films have showed in numerous national and international festivals, conferences, galleries, educational institutions and community centers. Awards include: The SFFILM 2017 Documentary Film Fund, Graham Foundation Grant to Individuals, the Filmmaker Fund Grant, Espera Productions Grant (Luxembourg), Gelman Travel Fellowship, PBS Silvers Award for Independent Film; Invited participant: DOK Incubator (Czech Republic, Sweden, Slovakia), IFP Documentary Labs, Spotlight on Documentaries at IFP's Independent Film Week Forum (2015, 2018), and Featured filmmaker at the Chicago Architecture Biennial. Meredith is an alum of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BA 2004), and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (MFA 2010). She currently teaches at SAIC in the Film, Video, New Media and Animation department.

NEW FACES: PHD IN SCREEN CULTURES

Dani Kissinger (they/them/theirs) is interested in studying horror genres at the intersections of politically committed critical cultural and media studies. They have already published some work in this vein, and have strong interests in the way that media structured around ghosts and haunting offer potentially new forms of agency and relationality.

Madison ("Maddie") Alan-Lee (she/her/hers) is intrigued by the roles dystopian television plays in 21st century conceptions of technological change, privacy and surveillance. At this time she is particularly interested in the BBC/Netflix collaboration *Black Mirror*, however she envisions an historically rooted project that uses sociohistorical, archival, and ethnographic methods to explore patterns of privacy-related fears and their exchange with past and current television texts.

Rita Lin (she/her/hers) Rita's interests lie in posthuman identity and film, and especially, the ways that film sound contributes to an understanding of film as a signifier of posthuman and postmodern identity. She is posing questions about the independent subjectivities carried by film music, whether it conforms to or contradicts the film image it accompanies.

Myrna Moretti's (she/her/hers) work considers the complex representation of female agency, free will, race, technology, and politics in contemporary American



media. She is interested in the way that these terms function for audiences and in narratives both contemporary and historical. She imagines a potential genealogy of female willfulness, agency and free will on screen that would incorporate characters as various as Hildy in *His Girl Friday*, Nola Darling in *She's Gotta Have It*, Cookie Lyon in the Fox television series *Empire* and Arya Stark and Daenerys Targaryen in HBO's *Game of Thrones*.

Raven Morris (she/her/hers) is interested exploring culturally specific concepts of African American memory and storytelling as exemplified in historical and contemporary works of documentary and fictional love stories, family histories and stories of migration. She hopes to locate spaces in modern cultural storytelling where dominant ideologies are challenged by alternative narratives.

Kimberly Schreiber (she/her/hers) is interested in aesthetic trends in humor across media forms, especially as those trends are shaped and affected by traumatic 20th and 21st century events. She is also interested applying these ideas to diasporic— specifically Transpacific— media forms. Kimberly plans to pursue a theory/practice oriented scholarship, engaging both Screen Cultures faculty and colleagues in RTVF's screenwriting and production units.

NEW FACES: MFA IN DOCUMENTARY MEDIA

Emmely Aldave was born in Peru and came to the United States when she was 9 years old. She lived in a very small town in New York. Spanish is her first language but when she came to the States, she fell in love with the English language. Aldave got her BA in English Literature and Spanish. She currently is a teacher assistant in an elementary school where she teaches both English and Spanish. During her senior year of college, Aldave decided to make a small film about immigrants. Aldave is currently working on a documentary for the school that she works with and is also teaching students on how to create their own content. She aspires to make films that have an impact on the viewer's mind, even so, to create a ripple effect in this society. Through Northwestern's MFA in Documentary Media, she wants to learn how to expand her voice, her storytelling and increase her knowledge in film production.



Ian Bertorelli was born and raised in Chicago. He speaks English, some Italian, and a little Japanese and Gaelic. Bertorelli studied writing for the screen and stage in New York City at NYU Tisch and finished his undergraduate degree in 2009. Since then he has been a self-employed artist and craftsman. Bertorelli is interested in documentary as a tool for social change and is fascinated by Chicago's rich history of documentarians and journalists. Bertorelli hopes to meet some new collaborators and encounter new viewpoints and perspectives in the program with the goal of enriching and complicating his own work and practice. In this past year, Bertorelli has been building bespoke maple furniture. He is a violinist/fiddler going on 30 years playing the instrument.



Milton Guillén is a Nicaraguan independent filmmaker that explores the borders between fiction and documentaries. His main interests gravitate around the cinematic intersections of ethnographic research and sensorial experiences. Milton's first feature, *The Maribor Uprisings*, is a live participatory documentary about social unrests and has screened in major film festivals and universities around the world, earning it the Society for Visual Anthropology Best Feature Film award in 2017. Milton studied anthropology at Colby College and film direction at the Film and Television Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU) in Prague. He's directed several commercials, documentaries, and fiction projects in several countries and hopes to dwell in the formalistic possibilities of documentary while at Northwestern.



Mireya Guzmán-Ortiz is a queer, racialized, child of immigrants. They grew up in Oregon and received their BA from Kalamazoo College in Michigan. There, they majored in Critical Ethnic Studies, minored in German, and completed a concentration in Media Studies. Their undergraduate thesis was a short experimental documentary about gender and coloniality. After working at a youth driven arts collaborative for a year, they decided it was time to expand and grow their storytelling and technical documentary skills. At NU, they will further develop the trans and interdisciplinary work of combining the quotidian, the academic, and the aesthetic. Mireya is excited to continue working toward liberation, using media and art to whittle away at—and thrive within and without—systems that oppress so many of us.

Cecilia Kim is a South Korean born artist and has called England, Australia, Singapore, and Chicago "home," traveling expansively across the world. Kim has received her Bachelors in Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and is focused on finding the crossover between fine art moving image and documentary filmmaking. She documents conversations and intimate encounters with people around her. Recording in Korean with diaristic subtitles, Kim explores cultural displacement and strings together personal narratives. She draws inspiration from Slow Cinema and videos that document socially engaged art practice. During the past year she has interned at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and EXPO CHICAGO. At Northwestern, she strives to learn and adopt documentary techniques that will allow a more effective delivery of these collected narratives.

Elana Meyers was born and raised in New York City. She went to Oberlin College in Ohio where she first got a taste of the great midwest. After graduating, she worked at a few production companies as a freelancer and did camera work on feature docs. Her most exciting job was operating camera for Careforce, a web series about a mom, her son, and their 1960 Mercury Station Wagon as they traveled from New York to Miami talking to domestic workers about their rights. She also was recently given a grant to film a short doc in Shanghai about a precocious seamstress. Besides making, watching, or talking about films, Elana enjoys traveling, cooking, and dog sitting.

NEW FACES: MFA IN DOC MEDIA CONTINUED

Ruidi Ni is from China and graduated from East China Normal University with a degree in Environmental Science. While Ni majored in science during high school, it was on campus at East China Normal University that he discovered his real passion for filmmaking. Ni is interested in exploring sub-cultures and wishes to excavate stories of lesser known cultures and people. Ni has recently been traveling the world from Shanghai to South Africa creating a series of short documentaries examining the cultures and stories of each country he visits. While at Northwestern, Ni hopes to strengthen his foundation of storytelling and improve his ability to explore diverse cultures via documentary.



Isabella Ostos was born in Cali, Colombia, where she lived until the age of twelve. Isabella attended Florida State University and graduated with a bachelors degree in anthropology and international affairs. She has worked under the supervision of Professor Cheryl Furjanic of NYU, where she conducted archival research on queer activists in the United States, furthering her understanding of documentary making. She wants to utilize documentary media as a medium to investigate and cover social justice issues that affect minorities on a domestic and international level. More specifically issues related to race and immigration in the United States and Latino America.



Abbigail Vandersnick is a multi-media artist working within frames of film, photography, sound art, installations, and writing. She graduated in 2015 from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a Bachelor in Fine Arts, and moved to Houston, Texas, later in the same year. She has worked as an editor, director, screenwriter, cinematographer, and post-supervisor on various short and feature films. She has recently finished post-production on the feature film, *Seeds of All Things*, about HOPE Clinic, a community healthcare center, and the families that seek its services. At Northwestern, Abbigail hopes to find fellow collaborators, makers, and artists who wish to challenge the process of documentary making in all of its iterations and imbue these questions into the work that's created within and beyond the program. She also hopes to improve upon her skills in cinematography, sound, and remain open to the insights and wisdom of her fellow creative classmates.

Xinyan Wang was born and raised in Tianjin, a city in northern China. She earned her BA in French at Bryn Mawr College with a minor in Film Studies. Her interest in documentaries started with an intro class during her sophomore year. Her internship experiences with an independent documentary filmmaker and at Philadelphia Community Access Media offer her a more comprehensive understanding of the life as a documentary filmmaker and an opportunity to practice her editing skills. During this past semester, her senior thesis examined the philosophy of *cinéma vérité* brought up by Jean Rouch and its development in France. At the same time, she also made a short film experimenting with the form of docu-fiction. She is interested in creating documentaries about lives of ordinary people in Chinese society. Xinyan hopes to get a systematic training on technical skills as well as film theories and to create documentaries under the help of professionals at Northwestern.

Zixin Zhang is an artist, filmmaker and screenwriter from Beijing, China, who received her BFA from School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her exhibitions about film, painting and sculpture installations have been seen across the world, including the United States, Spain, China, India, and Russian etc. As one of the founders of Vofo Studio, she aims to use the broad applicability of photography and film to ignite changes. Zhang has directed and shot her own feature-length documentary in the Antarctic with the scientific group that focuses on issues of children's education while exploring the environment of Antarctica in the world of nature, science, and art. While feeding her lifelong curiosity about film and media, she believes she can make films and documentaries while challenging the boundary and provoking changes through the MFA in Documentary Media program at Northwestern.

CLASS OF 2020

NEW FACES: MFA IN WRITING FOR THE SCREEN & STAGE

Leah Roth Barsanti is equal parts writer and activist, with special interests in educational equity, healthcare, and women's rights. Most recently, she wrote *Anxiety Play*, which delves into all three of these topics and was featured as part of The Chicago Women's Theatre Alliance New Play Development Series. Her work has been seen in South Florida, St. Louis, and the famed theatre town of Skokie, Illinois. In addition to plays, Leah writes children's fiction about talking animals with her writing partner, Kathleen Elizabeth Kreisel. Leah's alter-ego, Blink 1SK8E2, can be found on the track, skating with Chicago's premiere roller derby team, the Windy City Rollers.



Pat Cavanaugh is a writer and improviser from the Greater Chicago area who has called Uptown, Chicago home for three years. Pat received a B.A. in English Writing and Political Science from Illinois Wesleyan University, where they produced a wide body of short fiction and poetry. After moving to Chicago proper and becoming involved in the improv and sketch scenes, Pat's love for poetry and short fiction developed into a passion for screenwriting. Pat's web series, *Dear Dark Lord* — a comedy-horror genre piece written/produced/scored by Pat — will be released on internets everywhere sometime in summer 2018.



Melanie Coffey grew up in Mystic, CT, and has spent the last five years in New York. The first four were spent earning a BFA in film from LIU Post. This last year was spent working, living in Brooklyn's coffee shops and writing films, television scripts, and plays. Her play *I Liked You Five Minutes Ago* was accepted into the NY Winter Theater Festival 2018. Most recently Melanie completed a pie-centric web series that has been picked up, which should be delicious. When not writing she makes experimental and video art films. One was screened at the Arctic Group in May 2018.



Ray Goldberg is a Chicago-born-and-raised freelance producer and writer. As an undergraduate she attended the University of Michigan, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Screen Arts

and Cultures. She is currently a staff writer for the award-winning podcast *PleasureTown*, a content producer and editor for the gaming podcast *Tabletop Potluck*, and Production Manager for the theatre group *Nothing Without a Company*. Her first of two live lit debates on the satirical news revue *The Skewer* was published in its Best of 2017 compilation book. Ray has previously worked as a Media Educator for *Facets Multi-Media* and a Production Coordinator for *Full Spectrum Features*.

Erika Hakmiller is a writer and comedian from Maine or Alabama - depends who you ask. She has a B.F.A. in Musical Theatre from Drake University and studied at iO Theatre, The Second City, and Zanies. Her play *Lost and Found* was workshopped and produced by The New Colony's Associate Company. In 2017 she wrote and performed with The Second City Training Center's musical house ensemble, *Infinite Sundaes*, where she helped create a new musical, *A Better Brothers Grimm*. Her work has been seen at Women's Funny Fest, Chicago Sketchfest, The New Colony, and The Mary Scruggs Works by Women Festival. Her pilot, *Tour Kids*, was a finalist in the 2017 Maine Film Initiative. Erika co-hosts a monthly variety showcase, *Time of the Month*, at The Winchester.

Keyanna Khatiblou is a Chicago-based writer and performer. She developed her love for devised theatre and new works growing up in Glendale, Arizona. In Tucson, AZ, she produced, devised, wrote, and performed original micro-plays with *Short Attention Span Theatre*, which was later performed at the Cincinnati Fringe Festival. In Chicago, she's performed and devised original work with *About Face Theatre*, *The New Colony*, *Pop Magic Productions*, *Wild Atlas Theatre Collective*, and *Drinking and Writing Theater*. Her short play *Commute* was produced as part of *The Future Is Female Festival*; the expanded full-length play will receive a reading at *Prop Thtr* this fall.

NEW FACES: MFA IN WRITING CONTINUED

Gabi Lovelace is a graduate of Carthage College's class of 2018, where she majored in general theatre. During her time at Carthage Gabi worked on about a dozen shows in many capacities, most notably as assistant director of Carthage's 2017 mainstage performance of M.T. Cozzola's *Twin Set*. Gabi's plays *Future Tense*, which was done as part of a night of staged readings to raise awareness and money for the local mental health center, *Nail Polish and Pudding Salad*, and her musical adaptation of the children's book *The Ugly Princess* and the *Wise Fool*, have all received stage readings at Carthage. Gabi worked as an intern at Chicago Dramatists Theatre during the summer of 2017, where she learned about theatre operations and playwriting and got to work with the loveliest people. Gabi is currently living in her hometown of Aurora, Illinois.

Tony Mantia hails from St. Louis, Missouri, but has made Chicago his home for the past decade. Despite having frosted tips in middle school, he went on to graduate from Loyola University Chicago with a B.A. in Theater, and another in Advertising/Public Relations. He's completed the iO Training Center program and The Second City Conservatory program. For the past several years he's been a regular house ensemble performer with The Chicago Improv Den. In 2014, his one-act play *Glory Days* was produced in his hometown. Since then he's completed a smattering of other writing projects, including his first novella, *Surprise!* He enjoys running, reading biographies, and watching baseball as often as he can.

Emily McDermott is a playwright and comedian from Birmingham, England. She has a BA in English and Music from the University of Leeds, where she was a member of the sketch comedy troupe *Fresh Milk*. Her debut play, *Hillary's Kitchen*, follows Hillary Clinton drinking wine with other influential women from history in the days following the 2016 presidential election results and will be performed at this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival (also Emily's directorial debut). Previously, Emily has interned with BBC News and she covered the UK General Election for Sky News last summer. Emily has a huge interest in



improv and loves anything by Tina Fey or Victoria Wood. Besides writing, Emily is also a keen musician and composer.

Vynique Scot began on Earth Day twenty three years ago and has been cultivating herself ever since. She was an athlete for many years before turning to the theatre, where she began to perform during high school. She received a BA in Biological Anthropology from Boston University, where she was pre-med for two and a half years. Late last year, Vynique finished a television pilot called *Ad Astra* and is currently working on the second episode. She is also working on writing two feature films and a full length play.

Sharena Sigmon was born and raised on the southwest side of Chicago where her love for storytelling began. In 2012, she graduated from Columbia College Chicago with a BA in Fiction Writing, where she was selected exclusively for their Semester in LA screenwriting program. Since then, she has continued to immerse herself into the world of writing and film by attending Chicago Screenwriters Network meetings, volunteering at the Chicago International Film Festival, and collaborating with the online production company HitRECORD. She is currently working on a screenplay, a TV series, and a novel, and you can probably find her at a movie theater watching the latest Marvel movie.

Patrick Vermillion is a playwright/general dude from New Jersey. He graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 2015 and moved to scenic Brooklyn, NY, shortly after where he's lived semi-happily ever since. He has spent the past three years programming in C# by day and writing, performing, and generally annoying the tri-state area by night. Some of the things he's proud of include the David Lindsay-Abaire award from his alma mater, winning the Del Close Marathon indie tournament with his best friends on New Greta, and the off-off Broadway premiere of his play, *Jessica*, going up as a winner of Sanguine Theater Company's Project Playwright. In his downtime Patrick enjoys hanging with his massive cat Hector, walking through New York's finest public parks, and eating literally anything.

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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

Ines Sommer: Associate Director of MFA in Documentary Media

Miriam Joanna Petty: Director of Graduate Studies in Screen Cultures Program

Jacob Smith: Director of MA in Sound Arts and Industries

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