

Northwestern University

Department of Radio/Television/Film

Fall 2020

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Alumni News



Hillary Bachelder's (RTVF '12) *Represent* (above) a feature-length documentary co-produced by Kartemquin Films and ITVS, had its national PBS broadcast on October 26, 2020. The film was first released in virtual theaters through Music Box Films in August and received critical acclaim from the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, and The Guardian, among others. *Represent* is now available on Independent Lens, iTunes, and Amazon. *Represent* was directed, shot, and edited by **Hillary Bachelder** and produced by **Rachel Pikelny** and **Anne Sobel**. All three women are NU alumni.

Will Arbery (WSS '15) was named the single *Whiting Award Winner of 2020*. Will was also a *finalist for the Pulitzer Prize* for his play, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, which was cited as a scrupulously hewn drama centering on four alumni of a conservative Catholic college who confront themselves and each other, clashing over theology, politics and personal responsibility.

Sarah Gubbins (WSS '08) wrote the screenplay for *Shirley*, a biographical film about noted horror writer Shirley Jackson, directed by Josephine Decker. The film won the *U.S. Dramatic Special Jury Award at Sundance* and was picked up for distribution by **Neon** and released in June. It is now available on major streaming platforms. After viewing, read how Sarah breaks down the "complicated ending" [here](#).

Jennifer Boles (MFA Doc '19) published an [essay](#) about her thesis film, *The Reversal*, in the journal Photography and Culture in a special series about Capitalism and Photography. The film's fall screenings include festivals such as Chicago International, New Orleans Film Festival, Antimatter, AmDocs, Chicago Underground, and DOXA, among others.

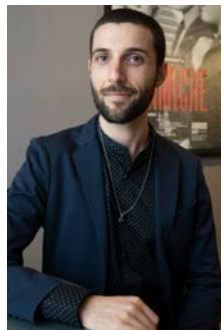


Leah Roth Barsanti (MFA WSS '20) recently accepted a teaching position as an adjunct professor at [East/West University](#).



Cami Guarda's (MFA Doc '19) thesis film *The Women and the Sea* had a very exciting Summer. The short documentary won Best International Latino Short Film at NYC's Latin Film Market and the Latino Short Documentary Award at Texas' Festival de Cine Latinoamericano. Up next, *The Women and the Sea* will screen at the Academy Award-Qualifying [St. Louis International Film Festival](#) from Nov. 5th - 22nd and will have its Latin

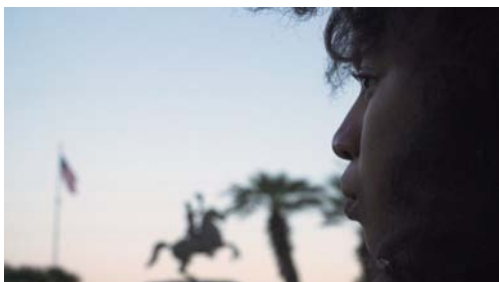
American premiere that same month in Chile's Festival Internacional de Cine Antofagasta, where she was invited to participate in the Best International Short competition.



Maria Finitzio (MFA WSS '08) screened her film [The Dilemma of Desire](#) at DOCNYC in November. It also premiered at Raindance in the UK continuing a seven month festival run.

Nevo Shinaar (MFA Doc '17) selected as part of [Newcity's Film 50](#) 2020!

Milton Guillén (MFA Doc '20) served as a programmer for [Camden International Film Festival](#) with hybrid and artist programs receiving great reviews in the [Boston Globe](#) and [Real Screen](#)



Naeema Torres' (MFA Doc Media '19) MFA thesis documentary, *Redacted*, screened virtually at the New Orleans Film Festival in November and won Best Documentary at Dayton Independent Film Festival and Black X Film Festival. She also co-produced the short documentary *Larry From Gary* with award-winning filmmaker Dan Rybicky, which premiered this summer

at Indy Fest and screened at St. Louis International Film Festival. Naeema also received a \$5k production award towards her episodic audio documentary project, *Land of Lincoln*, which will examine the way Black History has been documented and put on display in the United States through the legacy of The Crenshaw House. This project is an extension of *House on the Hill*, an ethnographic short in development which she co-pitched as a finalist for Tribeca's If/Then Midwest competition.

Sam Clapp (MA Sound '18) was nominated for a Jeff Award for his sound design on *Sugar in Our Wounds*.

Sarah Espinoza (MA Sound '19) was nominated for a Jeff Award for her sound design on *The Boys in the Band*.

Exal Iraheta (WSS '19) was selected for the prestigious [Playwrights Unit at The Goodman Theatre](#). His play *They Could Give No Name* was chosen as a finalist for the O'Neill's 2020 National Playwrights Conference, finalist for the Judith Royer Excellence in Playwriting Award, and was an honorable mention for the American Playwriting 2019 Foundation's Relentless Award. He recently signed with A3 Artists Agency's Theatre Literary team.



Isabella Ostos Campo's (MFA Doc Media '20) thesis film, *tres cuartos y un techo*, premiered at the [CineToro Experimental Film Festival](#) in Cali, Colombia in November.



Natasha Nair (MFA Doc Media '17) moved back to Mumbai, India, after working for a year as a Color Assist at Company 3 in New York. Her thesis film, *In The Wake*, will have its Chicago Premiere at the Chicago Underground Film Festival in November. *In The Wake* is now available on [Aeon](#), a video magazine platform.



Luther Clement (MFA Doc '17) has been selected for inclusion in DOC NYC's 3rd annual ["40 Under 40"](#) list celebrating young talent.

Sofya Levitsky-Weitz (WSS '15) is staffed on Sam Esmail's new Watergate drama series [Gaslit](#).

Hasan Demirtas' (MFA Doc Media '17) feature documentary *You Name It* continues to garner festival selections including [Collected Voices Film Festival \(Chicago\)](#), [Treasure Coast International Film Festival \(Florida\)](#), the [Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival \(Greece\)](#), and the [International Film and TV Broadcasters Festival \(Romania\)](#)



Ian Bertorelli's (MFA Doc Media '20) MFA thesis film, *Sacred Brick Technology*, was an official selection at the 56th Chicago International Film Festival. It competed in the City & State shorts program for the Chicago Award. Festival patrons were able to stream the short film on-demand for the duration of the remote film festival.

Megan Lubin (MA Sound '19) is a production fellow for the podcast *Switched on Pop*.

Evelyn Kreutzer (PhD Screen Cultures '20) Evelyn has published excerpts of her dissertation, "Televising Taste" which explores how musicians and conductors from Leonard Bernstein to Victor Borge to Nam June Paik used television to address large audiences and to disrupt the class, gendered, and/or racialized taste hierarchies of the European classical music cannon. An article based on her chapter on Paik won the Claudia Gorbman Student

Writing Award from the Sound & Music SIG of the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and will appear in the 2020 winter issue of *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* journal. Evelyn also co-edited and contributed a piece to *Once Upon a Screen*, a collection of audio-visual essays on cinephilia and cinematic childhood hauntings that was published as part of the latest issue of [The Cine-Files](#).

BJ Tindal's (WSS '18) play *Goodnight, Tyler* was live streamed to benefit the National Black Theatre, and was the inaugural presentation of new multimedia production company Dumont Millennial Productions.

Whitney Pow (PhD Screen Cultures '20) published excerpts from their dissertation "Stored in Memory: Queer and Transgender Life in Software History," in "That's Not Who I Am: Calling Out and Challenging Stereotypes of Asian Americans," in *Gendered Lives: Intersectional Perspectives* (Oxford University Press, 2019) and "Stored in Memory." in *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing*. Whitney will be joining the NYU faculty in fall as a Tenure Track Assistant Professor.

Dolores Díaz (WSS '19) is currently developing plays as part of the Playwrights Collective at TimeLine Theatre, as playwright-in-residence for Shattered Globe Theater's Protégé Program, and writing for the musical group Sones de México. In 2021, Dolores will continue her professional development with Tectonic Theater Project's Moment Work Institute in New York. She currently serves as a Dramatists Guild Ambassador for the Chicago region.

Lyra Yang (WSS '19) recently won the Judith Royer Excellence in Playwriting Award with her historical play *Paper Dream*, which dramatizes the separation of Chinese immigrants into the United States during the early twentieth century. She is also currently a playwright fellow at Cohesion Theatre in Baltimore.

Catherine Harrington (PhD Screen Cultures '20) published excerpts of her dissertation "Consuming Confinement: Real Prisons on Screen, 1970-Present," in [The Palgrave Handbook of Incarceration in Popular Culture](#) and Issue #85 of [The Velvet Light Trap](#) this year. She is currently working as an Instructor at the University of Toledo.

Faculty News



Marco Williams has been awarded an NEH development grant for a documentary: *Eyes on the Prize Reclaimed*. The 90-minute documentary will explore the 'making-of' *Eyes on the Prize*, interwoven with the filmmakers' experiences as civil rights activists. It will explore the series' significance in teaching generations of Americans about the

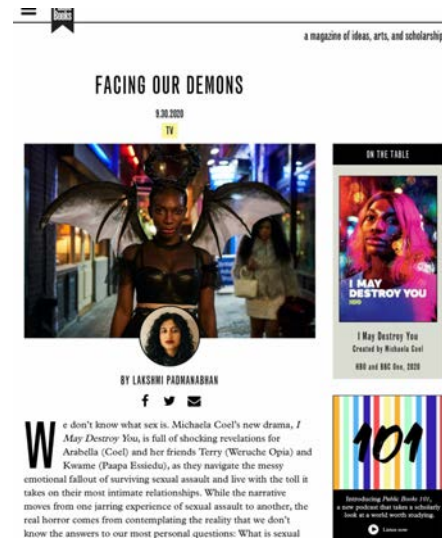


Dave Tolchinsky's film *Cassandra*, which features the voice talents of Prof. **Thomas Bradshaw** and social media by RTVF recent alum **Genevieve Kane**, was named Best Short at Genreblast Film Fest, Best Horror Film at Oxford International Shorts Film Fest, Best Thriller Short and Best Editing at Women in Horror Film Fest, and Tolchinsky was named Best

civil rights movement, and it will measure its lasting impact in light of recent thinking about the movement, in scholarly work and in public sites of memory.

Director at Atlanta Underground Film Fest. Cassandra will soon be seen at festivals in New York, Italy, and Spain. Cassandra continues to stream on Alter, where it has over 100k views. To learn more, check out this 5-star review in [UKFilmreview](#).

Lakshmi Padmanabhan published new essays on visualizing violence and feminist protest. "[Facing Our Demons](#)" reviews the complex visual language of sexual desire and violation in the new HBO show, *I May Destroy You*. "A Feminist Still" discusses an aesthetics of stillness in the work of Indian documentary photographer, Sheba Chhachhi, whose early photographs of the struggle for women's rights in India are a rich archive of feminist activism and formal experimentation. Forthcoming in [Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies](#) (Issue 105)



The image shows a digital magazine page. At the top, it says "a magazine of ideas, arts, and scholarship". The main title is "FACING OUR DEMONS" with a date of "9.30.2020" and a "TV" icon. Below the title is a large photograph of a woman with large, dark, bat-like wings. To the right of this photo is a smaller image of a woman with pink hair, with the text "ON THE TABLE" above it and "I MAY DESTROY YOU" below it. Underneath the main photo is a small circular portrait of the author, Lakshmi Padmanabhan, with the text "BY LAKSHMI PADMANABHAN" and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email. Below this is a paragraph of text starting with "We don't know what sex is. Michaela Coel's new drama, *I May Destroy You*, is full of shocking revelations for Arabella (Coel) and her friends Terry (Werauche Opia) and Kwame (Paapa Essiedu), as they navigate the messy emotional fallout of surviving sexual assault and live with the toll it takes on their most intimate relationships. While the narrative moves from one jarring experience of sexual assault to another, the real horror comes from contemplating the reality that we don't know the answers to our most personal questions: 'What is sexual



In August, the Criterion Channel launched a "**Three by Stephen Cone**" series, including the films *The Wise Kids*, *Henry Gamble's Birthday Party* and *Princes Cyd* along with a new interview recorded for the series by the [Criterion Collection](#).

Stephan Moore was nominated for a [Bessie](#) for over 5 hours of music that he created to accompany the piece [Last Audience](#) by the Brooklyn-based performance group a canary torsi. The piece was featured in the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art's TBA Festival, and is being presented virtually this Fall to the MCA in Chicago where it received this [review](#) in the New York Times.



Moore also released a new album, *Dreamwalk with Solo Voice*, based on the sound installation he created for last year's Chicago Sound Show at the University of Chicago. In August, his artist collective Evidence presented "The Way In," an experimental audio-centric video game at the Irish Sound Science and Technology Association's 2020 Festival.

After a Best Documentary win at the Vail Film Festival, **Ines Sommer's** [Seasons of Change on Henry's Farm](#) has continued to play at festivals alongside an extended "virtual cinema" run at the Gene Siskel Film Center. Dovetailing with Ines' interest in community engagement across the region, the Illinois

Arts Alliance highlighted the film at the statewide 2020 One State Together in the Arts conference. Supported by an Illinois Humanities Council grant, Seasons also recently embarked on a tour across Illinois to engage rural communities in a dialogue about food, farming and climate change.

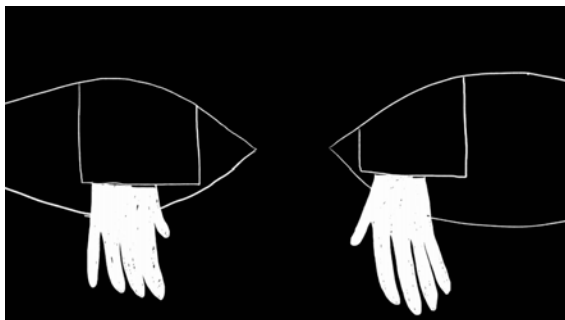


Eliza Bent's livestream one-woman play, "Karen, I Said" received an enthusiastic review in the [New York Times](#). She was also selected for the Goodman Theatre's prestigious [Playwrights Unit](#).



Assistant Professor **Danielle Beverly's** documentary *[Dusty Groove: The Sound of Transition](#)* completed its 17-month film festival tour in Fall 2020. It won Best Music Film at the Macon Film Festival and Best Feature at The South Georgia Film Festival. The documentary follows a Chicago used vinyl buyer and the people who sell him their prized vinyl record collections, as they navigate both difficult and liberating life transitions. In July 2020, Al Jazeera English broadcast Beverly's documentary *[2015 Old South](#)* on its "Witness" strand. Beverly was also selected as a Film 50 "Chicago Screen Gem" by Newcity.

Debra Tolchinsky's short documentary, *Contaminated Memories*, screened and competed for the Documentary Short Award at [FIPADOC](#) International Documentary Festival in Biarritz, France. Debra then took *Contaminated Memories* to California, where she spoke as part of the [Marian Miner Cook Athenaeum speaker series](#). Debra was also a featured guest on the Podcast [Free Food For Thought](#).



Eric Patrick's new short animation *[Lines of Exile](#)* has screened at festivals in 7 countries, including at the Intermediaciones Muestra de Videoarte y Video Experimental in Medellin, Colombia, the [Carmel International Short Film Festival](#) in Israel, and the upcoming Animaevka Festival of Animated Films in Belarus.

Clayton Brown's documentary *We Believe in Dinosaurs* recently played at [Docville](#) (Belgium) and [Docs Against Humanity](#) (Poland). The film was also presented at the

international conference on Vertebrate Paleontology in Kentucky.



JP Sniadecki released a new film, *The Shape of Things to Come*, which has screened at [Camden International Film Festival](#) in Maine, and [The Art of The Real](#) at Lincoln Center, Centre George Pompidou, Jean Rouch Ethnographic Film Festival, RIDM, DocumentaMadrid. The film also won Special Mention at L'Alternativa Film Festival and was selected for the "Best of the Fests" section at [the IDFA](#) in The Netherlands. It was also featured in an interview in Cineaste's fall issue as well as receiving reviews in *Brooklyn Rail*, *Senses of Cinema*, and *Modern Times*. The film was also picked up for distribution by Grasshopper Films and will be released on Mubi soon. JP's film *El Mar La Mar* was picked up for UK distribution by Second Run. JP's work was also the subject of a retrospective in Chile at [Frontera Sur](#).

Hamid Naficy served on the editorial board of *Studies in World Cinema: A Critical Journal* (Brill Press) and published the following articles: "Collecting Pre- and Post-Revolution Iranian Movie Posters in the US and in Iran," in *Collecting Prints, Posters, and Ephemera: Perspectives in a Global World*; "Slow, Closed, Recessive, Formalist, and Dark—the Cinema of Sohrab Shahid Saless," in *ReFocus: The Films of Sohrab Shahid Saless: Exile, Displacement and the Stateless Moving-Image*; and "Iranian Internet Cinema, A Cinema of Embodied Protest: Imperfect, Amateur, Small, Unauthorized, Global," *Media Cartographies and Spatial Knowledge in the Middle East and North Africa* (Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming 2021).

Jacob Smith published several articles and audio projects, including "The Eco-poetic Potential of a Citizen Science Audio Database: Uploading John Clare to Xeno-canto," *Journal of Environmental Media*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2020. "Travels with Jack: ZBS's Post-Network Radio Adventure," *Resonance*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2020. "The Pteropoetics of Birdstrike," *Journal of Sonic Studies*, Vol 20, Winter 2020. "The Pteropoetics of Birdstrike" features a 20 min experimental audio documentary. Listen [here](#).

Current Student News

Undergraduates



Seungjoo Oh (Class of 2021) received the Bernstein Global Awards from the National Academy of Television Arts & Science. The award will be presented at the 2020 Chicago Emmy Awards. The Chicago Emmys will be available via live streaming on their [website](#). Seungjoo's thank you video is available [here](#).



RTF Junior **Wendy Li** received a Summer Undergraduate Research Grant to do a firsthand study of "[Tuwei Cyber Culture in China](#)," advised by Professor Laura Kipnis. Wendy's paper, subtitled "The Rural as Resistance," was published this fall in the online journal *Politics/Letters*.

Screen Cultures

Crystal Camargo is a research volunteer for an initiative identifying historical inequities for the former *Cinema Journal* and *Journal for Cinema and Media Studies*. She will be a 2020-21 columnist for *Flow Journal* and is the Grad. Rep. for Latino/a Caucus for SCMS. She published a piece through *Short Attention Span Criticism*, SCMS+ over the summer on the role of a bilingual news anchor on US Spanish-language television.

Julia Peres Guimaraes was accepted to "Site/Seeing: Sites of Spectatorship" Cinema and Media Studies Graduate Student Conference at the U. of Chicago taking place next spring.

Writing for the Screen and Stage

Peter Ronson's (Class of 2021) pilot *Hubris* has placed in the following screenwriting contests: Semifinalist, Emerging Screenwriters - Genre Screenplay Competition 2020; Quarterfinalist, WeScreenplay TV Contest 2020; Semifinalist, Filmmatic TV Pilot Awards

Documentary Media

Alessandra El Chanti's documentary, *Watar El Ghurbeh* (2019), from Professor Marco Williams' Fall 2019 Doc Techniques class was selected by the Doha film Institute's [AJYAL FILM FESTIVAL](#) this year. It will be competing in the Made In Qatar Section. The film is about a Palestinian-American music composer who directs the Middle Eastern Music Ensemble at the University of Chicago.

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