



MFA IN FILM & TV

IN ASSOCIATION WITH KILLER FILMS

Welcome!

A Look Back: Recapping Our Fall Semester

The first official in-person semester of 2021 is coming to an end and what a semester it was. We, the students, were often told that the relationships you form with your cohort can last a lifetime and now that we've all officially met, we're starting to understand what the teachers were talking about. For the first time everyone was in the same place and not only were we more heavily part of each other's work and vision, we were also there for each other as a support system. We got to be in a classroom with our teachers and experience this program as it was meant to be experienced.

We also kept some of the perks of being online, which meant that we were able to speak with giants in the industry for our TV Writing Guest Series, like Marti Noxon, who would have otherwise not been able to make it to campus. We had in-person screenings of our Film students' work, as well as a table read of our Advanced Party class, read by actors. We were joined, in person, by three-time Academy Award Nominee James Schamus, who had a sit down with Christine Vachon, but also zoomed with cinematographer Ashley Connor, producer Mynette Louie, and director Andrew Ahn. Students formed film crews and acted in each other's productions. Screenwriters had the chance to see their work come to life. And as we wrap up this semester, one thing has become abundantly clear: the passion and dedication of the students and faculty, to each other and their craft, to create a safe space in which stories can be told and art so joyously celebrated, is what makes this Manhattan Center a place like no other.

An Evening With James Schamus

Master Class students watched Christine Vachon sit down for a conversation with three-time Academy Award Nominee James Schamus – in person! A producer, writer and director who also ran a film company, James is known for his work on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Brokeback Mountain*, Kitty Green's *The Assistant* and many more esteemed films. Schamus spoke with Vachon regarding recent industry developments and shared some of his own extensive experience with past productions before opening up the remaining time for a Q & A with the students.



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Alumna Feature Film Premiere

Eugina Gelberman, 2019 Film alumna, had her film, *The White Goddess*, premiere in Austria at the Fright Nights Festival, for which the lead actress Morgan Everitt won best actress. Eugina's feature premiere was followed by screenings at Tribeca in New York this past month. This first-generation, Brooklyn native, screenwriter/director, met her producer at NYWIFT's FS2P. She self-financed her 10K microbudget to create a film that brings Ancient Greek myths to the present. Eugina has written several other features and episodes and with seven years of content creation and stand up comedy under her belt, we're bound to see more from this wonderfully talented filmmaker.

Introducing Our December Graduates

Zhuoga Renqing

Zhuoga Renqing is a Tibetan filmmaker currently based in NYC. Her short narrative film ROOM was selected and screened in a bunch of film festivals. Zhuoga's now working on a documentary project. She likes to focus on ordinary people's ups and downs, believing filmmaking is a process of breaking the boundaries and dismissing prejudice.

Kyle Ronald

MFA directing student Kyle Ronald from Fairport, NY but currently lives in Astoria NY. Kyle graduated with a BA in Psychology from Stony Brook University. Along with Ashley Bello, Kyle is the Co-Director/Writer of the feature film, *Fourth Wall*.

Yi-Chiang Lin

Yi-Chiang Lin is a Taiwanese filmmaker pursuing a Film MFA degree at Stony Brook Manhattan in New York City. The subject matter in his works often deals with dreams, memory, and isolation. His works were officially selected in the 38th Golden Harvest Awards Short Film Festival and Ivy Film Festival and were awarded Best International Short Film at Roma Cinema Doc 2016.

Nelson Downend

Nelson Downend is a NYC based screenwriter and lighting designer currently pursuing his TV Writing MFA at Stony Brook University. His work explores the aftermath of emotional trauma and the power of the human connection. Nelson's scripts have advanced to the later rounds in various screenwriting programs and contests including Sundance, ScreenCraft, Roadmap Writers, Austin Film Festival, The Page International Screenwriting Awards, BlueCat, ISA and Final Draft's Big Break. Nelson has multiple projects on Coverfly's "Red List" in their respective genres.

Ada Halofsky

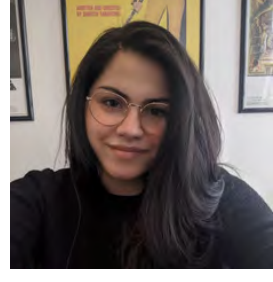
Ada has been an executive speechwriter for many years but says "those gigs aren't nearly as rewarding as my, so far, unpaid work as an award-winning TV dramedy writer". She is having a blast at "practicing make-believe" and is "hunting for people who equally appreciate complex characters and cracking open the light to let in the dark".

Ashley Bello

Ashley Bello, raised on Long Island NY. Currently resides in Astoria NY. Undergraduate degree in Multidisciplinary Major at Stony Brook University. Along with Kyle Ronald, Ashley is the Co-Director/Writer of the feature film, *Fourth Wall*.



Nelson Downend



Ashley Bello

Third-Year Spotlight

Third year TV Writing student Emma Gutt's original pilot *Village Witch* was honored as one of three FINALISTS at the Tony Cox Episodic Screenplay Contest at the 2021 Nantucket Film Festival, and as a SEMI-FINALIST at the 2021 Page International Screenwriting Awards. But this is not the only reason to celebrate Emma's talent. This fabulous screenwriter is currently a full time Writers Production Assistant on the Showtime series *City of a Hill*, starring Kevin Bacon and Aldis Hodge.

Productions

This semester the second year TV Writing cohort began filming their pilot episodes in Perry Blackshear's Directing for TV Writer's class. This close knit group all took on different roles in the film crew, to help bring page to screen. It was the perfect way to prime them for Webseries, a class that starts in Spring semester 2021. This class, taught by Kris Lefcoe, was just completed by our third year TV Writing cohort, with delays due to Covid. The third year webseries productions were a smashing success and will be screened on December 13th. The second-year Film cohort have also been hard at work this semester, honing their artistic vision and bringing their short films to life. The first-year Film cohort have been directing short exercises all semester long in preparation for their Spring short-film productions.



TV Writing Guest Series

This semester we continued our Guest Series in which Experienced TV-Writers and showrunners spoke to the TV writing MFA students (via Zoom). The TV writing students had the opportunity to learn from and ask questions of creatives currently succeeding in the industry! This term, we were particularly excited to speak with Marti Noxon (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*, *Madmen*, *Sharp Objects*, *Dietland*, *Unreal*). She talked about strategies for book adaptations and how Shonda Rhimes, Ryan Murphy and Matt Weiner

each run their writers rooms. It was an unforgettable night. Some other recent guests include Dan Perlman (Flatbush Misdeemeanors) and Erica Saleh (One of Us is Lying). Both Erica and Dan discussed their experiences as young writers leading new projects. The Guest Series is open to the TV Writing community at large.

Info Session Recap

On Wednesday, December 1st, Stony Brook hosted an informational session for prospective Film and Television MFA students. The event drew over 60 attendees from all over the world. Magdalene Brandeis and Alan Kingsberg headlined the event and Christine Vachon zoomed in from LA before a Q&A for her film, *The Velvet Underground*. Students broke out into their preferred MFA program and heard from Alan and Magdalene as well as from current students, alumni and other faculty on what the program is all about. The night was a success with many attendees getting just a taste of our Stony Brook Film and Television Writing MFA offerings.

Connect With Us!

Thank you for tuning into our final newsletter of the 2021 school year! See you in our next edition.

Be sure to follow us on our social media pages for any updates:

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To apply to our Film or TV Writing MFA programs or for more information, please visit <http://stonybrook.edu/film-tv-writing>

