

UCI Film and Media Studies School of Humanities

Volume 2
Fall 2021

The Department of Film and Media Studies continues to be a vibrant and growing community of students, faculty, media practice, and scholarship. This year, our faculty published six books and two of our alumni worked on Academy Award-nominated films. As we are constantly expanding to feature diverse experiences and powerful voices, we have added two new tenure-track professors and two new lecturers to our extremely talented roster of faculty members.

The 22nd Annual Zotfest

The 22nd Annual Zotfest was held virtually for the second time on June 5th, 2021. Zotfest is the annual student film festival hosted by Film-Arts-Drama Alliance, a UCI campus organization dedicated to collaborative student filmmaking. The student-run film festival acts as a celebration of all the talented filmmakers and storytellers at FMS and in the greater UCI Community. Working with faculty, staff, and alumni, the submissions were chosen for the festival. The selected films were:

Creative Women Directed by **Rachel Lynch**, *Burnt* Directed by **Brian Nguyen**, *Heart String* Directed by **Jonah Przybyszewski** and **Alyssa Liu**, *Thank You* Directed by **Dylan Quintero**, *Love and Death and War and* Directed by **Allan Dizon**, *Bot* Directed by **Brenna White**, *The Hand* Directed by **Connor Chan**, *Stay Over* Directed by **Haiqing Ding**, *The Perfect Post* Directed by **Jonathan De Guzman**, and *Hajun Blooms* Directed by **Ji Yoon Kim**.

Congratulations to the filmmakers included in the festival, and the members of FADA producing the event, and keeping alive the longest-running student-run film festival in the UC System. For more information on FADA and Zotfest, [please visit their website.](#)

Student Spotlight: Iyanna Blackburn



Iyanna Blackburn, class of 2021, received the Undergraduate Summer Fellowship Award, completing her fellowship with the Black Panther Project. In 1971, the Black Panther Party founded its longest running social program, the Oakland Community School. Operating for eleven years, the school served as a model of education for Black and poor children living in urban communities. This summer fellowship mentored UCI undergraduate students and contributed to the research and digital humanities project of the Oakland Community School. Iyanna attended project meetings, explored the Black Panther Party's chronology and digitized archives, and assisted with a documentary about the Oakland Community School by conducting virtual interviews, preserving the history of the program.

Growing up in Long Beach, California, Iyanna has always been a champion of the underrepresented. In 2020, in association with Anteater TV, Iyanna produced a documentary titled: [The 2%: Navigating UCI as a Black Student](#). As Black students only make up around 2% of the population at UCI, Iyanna rose to give a voice to a population which generally goes unheard. Iyanna sought to bring awareness "to the small demographic of Black students at UCI, to make sure that their stories do not go in vain, and to provide the next generations of Black students at UCI with advice and resources." Through interviews, Iyanna's film presents first-hand accounts of Black Student's experiences with everything from classes, to social clubs, and dating.

2021 Summer Internship Award

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Film and Media Studies Summer Internship Award: **Nikolas Sani** and **Sydney Caulder**. Nikolas worked as a Production Assistant at Seven Ten Media in Jakarta, Indonesia, a production company focused on telling unique human stories. He assisted in pre-production development and post-production management of several projects, including a documentary and a series of LGBTQ performance videos. When asked how his education at FMS prepared him for his internship, Nikolas stated: "I felt one of the most significant experiences from my internship is when I was asked about some ideas for a commercial project. One of the things I utilized was my ability to analyze the visual arts of the artist that we were going to hire for the project." Sydney interned at Zero Gravity Management, a management firm based in Los Angeles. During her time interning with Zero Gravity, Sydney wrote script coverage for feature films and television shows, researched Hollywood trends, and managed the company's 'Below the Line' social media accounts. When discussing how FMS prepared her for the internship, Sydney said: "The FMS 85 series ended up being very helpful for me in my internship. Being educated in film history and the moves that the industry has made and will continue to make is so important if you want to work in this business."

This scholarship is funded by a generous donation from UCI History alumni, Leon Dudevoir, in support of Film and Media Studies' student internships. Mr. Dudevoir had a career as a film executive for New Line Cinemas, working on films like *The Notebook*, *Rush Hour* and *Blade*. He's now retired and lives in Portland, and wanted to support current FMS students looking to enter the entertainment industry.



Alumni in Focus

Eszter Zimanyi | *Class of 2013*

Eszter Zimanyi successfully defended her dissertation, *Unsettled Media: Documenting Refugees and Europe's Shifting Borders Along the Balkan Route*, examining contemporary nonfiction media to demonstrate how multiple state actors and migrant-refugee communities use media to unsettle post-Cold War Europe's material and conceptual borders. Eszter is a researcher and instructor in the Division of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts, focused on global film, television, and new media histories and industries. Eszter strives to help students gain vital skills in media literacy, communication, and writing they can apply to their future careers within the entertainment industry.

Kelsey Carr | *Class of 2015*

Kelsey Carr served as a Producer on *All These Sons* (2021), a feature length documentary directed by Bing Liu and Joshua Altman, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in May 2021. Kelsey is an independent producer based in Los Angeles. Originally from New Jersey, Kelsey made her way into narrative and nonfiction filmmaking over seven years ago. In 2016, Kelsey began working for Oscar winning director, Davis Guggenheim, where she played an important role in building Concordia Studio. As Concordia Studio's Production Manager, Kelsey oversaw the production of several nonfiction films, including the Oscar-nominated film, *Time* (2020), and the Oscar-nominated film *Boys State* (2020).

Rose Bush | *Class of 2004*

Rose Bush recently served as the Director of Photography for the Oscar Award-winning short documentary, *Colette* (2021). As a director, cinematographer, and producer based in Brooklyn, NY, Rose works in narrative fiction and documentary. Rose's film *Vultures of Tibet* (2012) was nominated for an International Documentary Association Award for Best Short and a Student Academy Award, being regarded as "Remarkable depth of interpretation, as anthropological observation gives way to sobering socio-political commentary." Rose also directed *The Railroader* (2019), a documentary short film released on National Geographic's Short Film Showcase.

Professor **Catherine Liu's** essay, "Inequality, Technocracy, and National Healthcare: Taiwan and COVID-19", was published in Columbia University Press' collection titled *The Pandemic: Perspectives on Asia*. Her contribution discusses the films *Parasite* and *The Great Buddha+* in relation to the globalization and inequality of East Asian capitalism. Professor Liu also authored a book, *Virtue Hoarders* (University of Minnesota Press, 2021), showing how the Professional Managerial Class elite workers, in a world of performative identity and virtue signaling, stand to obstruct social justice and economic redistribution.

Professor **Meryem Kamil's** co-authored new book, *Technoprecarious*, an analysis that traces the role of digital technology in multiplying precarity, was published by MIT Press. This collaboratively authored multigraph analyzes the role of digital technology in multiplying precarity. The book maps a range of digital precarity—from the placement of Palestinian Internet cables to the manufacture of electronics by Navajo women to the deployment of drones on the U.S.–Mexico border. This project helps bridge ongoing debates on precarity of critical computing, postcolonial studies, visual culture, and information sciences.

Professor **Victoria E. Johnson's** newest book, *Sports TV* (Routledge, 2021), offers an introductory guide to sports TV, its history in the United States, the genre's defining characteristics, and an analysis of its critical significance for the business practices, formal properties, and social, cultural, and political meanings of the medium. Professor Johnson discusses the textual analysis of programs such as Monday Night Football and Being Serena to the examination of television rights details, to sports TV's technological innovations and engagement of critical political debates.

Professor **Luci Marzola's** book, *Engineering Hollywood Technology, Technicians, and the Science of Building the Studio System* (Oxford University Press, 2021) tells the story of the formation of the Hollywood studio system as an industry that brought together creative practices and cutting-edge technologies in ways never before seen. Using extensive archival research, her book examines the role of technicians, engineers, and trade organizations in creating a stable technological infrastructure on which the studio system rested for decades.

Professor **Braxton Soderman's** new book: *Against Flow: Video Games and the Flowing Subject* (MIT Press, 2021), takes a step back and offers a critical assessment of flow's historical, theoretical, political, and ideological contexts in relation to video games. With close readings of games that implement and represent flow, Professor Soderman not only evaluates the concept of flow in terms of video games but also presents a general critique of flow and its sibling, play.

During the Spring Quarter of 2021, Professor **Desha Dauchan** received research cluster funding through the Humanities Center to support the Black Panther Party/Oakland Community School Project she is conducting with Professor Judy Wu. Professor Dauchan launched an innovative course on the LA Rebellion, in which a series of iconic and important filmmakers had the ability to speak directly to students. Haile Gerima, Zeinabu Davis, and Grace Lee were among the many filmmakers sharing their experiences with our students. As a UCLA MFA grad, Desha has been identified as a filmmaker whose work continues the artistry and community-based legacy of the LA Rebellion, and this legacy is a consistent part of her pedagogy.

Professor **Fatimah Tobing Rony's** feature-length film project in development, *Annah La Javanaise*, was one of eight selected films from around the world to go to the Marché International du Film d'Animation d'Annecy, the highest-profile animation festival in the world, at Annecy, France, in June of 2021. She also took part in the Women in Animation summit at Annecy and a video panel of the female directors at Annecy. Additionally, her short film of the same title, *Annah la Javanaise*, won Best Short Film prizes at the Anifilm International Festival of Animation in Liberec, Czech Republic and at the Pixelatl Festival of Animation in Cuernavaca, Mexico, as well as Best International Film and Best Film Music at the Devenir Réalisateur Paris Film Festival in Paris, France, Best Animated Short at the LA Femme International Film Festival, Best Social Justice Film at the Hollywood Women's International Film Festival, and Best Film at the Edinburgh Short Film Festival. Her award-winning short was also an Official Selection in festivals around the world including Annecy, Paris, Berlin, Bristol U.K., Seoul, Rabat, Rome, Forli, Italy, San Francisco, and Copenhagen. The film reimagines the story of 13-year-old Annah who became French painter Paul Gauguin's maid and model in 1893.

Help Us Welcome Our New Staff and Faculty!

Amy Fujitani



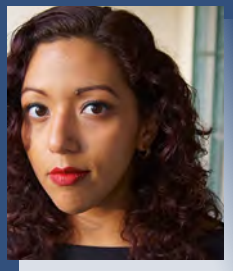
Amy Fujitani is the new department manager for the Film and Media Studies Department. Amy's former role of eight years, was as the Director of Graduate Study for the School of the Humanities. As Director, Amy oversaw all aspects of graduate student services in the School of Humanities, including admissions, budgeting, and financial aid. Amy holds a B.A. in Art History from the University of California, Berkeley, and received her M.S. in Counseling, from Cal State Long Beach. Amy has worked as Assistant Director of Graduate Student Affairs, Assistant Director of Graduate Affairs in the Samueli School of Engineering, and Academic Counselor at the Trevor School of the Arts. Amy is stepping into the shoes of Beth Pace, our previous department manager. Beth has accepted a promotion, now working in English Department in the School of Humanities. We wish both Beth and Amy the best of luck in their new roles!

Ricky Crano



Brand new to California after teaching for six years at Tufts, **Dr. Ricky Crano** is a critical media theorist whose research and teaching focuses on subjectivity and social power at the nexus of digital culture and neoliberal epistemology. Ricky graduated from The Ohio State University's doctoral program in Comparative Studies. His dissertation, *Posthuman Capital: Neoliberalism, Telematics, and the Project of SelfControl*, examines the ways neoliberal social and economic discourse influences the cultural evolution of the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. He is currently investigating the reactionary origins and implications of cryptocurrencies and NFT art.

Lesley Elizondo



Lesley Elizondo is a Mexican American director of photography and filmmaker from Los Angeles, California. As a first-generation art scholar; she writes, directs, and shoots stories based on the Mexican, Latino, and American experiences. Her work has been featured in film festivals across the United States including the Pride Film Festival in Chicago, the Latinx Film Festival in Los Angeles, and the Senorita Film Festival in Houston. She aims to bridge her multifaceted heritage by translating its intricacies and nuance through stories that explore themes of justice, identity, loss, and love. Lesley has a double B.A. in Film Production and Spanish Literature from Cal State Long Beach and an M.F.A. in Cinematography from UCLA.

Arcelia Gutiérrez



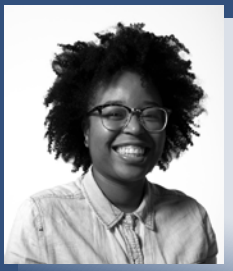
Dr. Arcelia Gutiérrez specializes in Latinx media studies, media activism studies, and media industry studies. Her current book manuscript tentatively titled *Deploying Latinidad: Contemporary Media Activism, Ethnoracial Scripts, and Counterpublics* traces how Latinx media activists navigate the deregulation and neo-liberalization and strategies they use to push for the inclusion of Latinxs in television, film, and radio. Her project outlines the efforts made by advocacy organizations over the decades: from protests against stereotypes in film and the threat of filing a "petition to deny" of the 80s, consumer boycotts in the 90s, the creation of professionalization and funding entities in the early 2000s, to digital activism.

Jon K. Oh



Jon K. Oh has a Masters of Fine Arts from The School of Cinema-Television at USC. He's been working in production and post-production sound for over 25 years, specializing in independent documentaries. Jon has been an Adjunct Professor in the Digital Audio Program at the University of La Verne for six years. Recent credits include *Barbed Wire Fence* about the fence dividing North and South Korea, *The Happy Days of Garry Marshall*, an ABC Primetime Special (2020), *Sergio Mendes: In the Key of Joy*, *Finding Home: A Foster Home Story* (PBS), *Masters of Modern Design: Art of the Japanese American Experience* (2019 Regional Emmy), and *Tyrus* one of Sightlinemag.org top seven art documentaries to watch.

Philana Payton



Dr. Philana Payton is a Black Cinema and Popular Culture scholar. Previously awarded a UC Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African-American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, her research focus uses Black Studies, Performance Theory, and Film Theory to explore blackness and visual culture through Black women's performances. Dr. Payton has also done extensive archival research on early 20th century Black Silent Cinema and has conducted race and gender analyses on classical era films through today's cinema, television, and media. She is currently working on her first manuscript, tentatively titled, *Celestial Bodies: Black Women, Hollywood, and the Fallacy of Stardom*.