

UCI Film and Media Studies

School of Humanities

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Creating During Crisis

Gary Giannoni III, Film and Media Studies class of 2020, was Co-Director of the Film and Drama Alliance's 21st annual Zotfest Film Festival, the longest running student run film festival in the UC system. With the sudden shift to remote learning and the cancellation of on-campus events in the Spring Quarter due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gary and his Co-Director, **Tori Aquino** were quick to adapt and take the festival online. Gary and Tori demonstrated true leadership as they continued to plan for the festival by calling for submissions, connecting screeners with films, selecting and coordinating with judges, and making the streaming of the festival accessible to all who wanted to watch. Gary had this to say about the experience:

"We made the executive decision to have the festival online. The festival was scaled down tremendously. At the top of Winter Quarter, we had about 40 or so active people working to make this event happen. In April, we only really could manage around six or seven. The mentality of the festival was that, at bare minimum, to have a venue in which the hard work of the students could be showcased. Because that was what really mattered: the student's work. The films that were made this school year needed to be honored. The biggest thing I've taken away from this experience was that community matters. I made so many friends from being involved, and I wanted to make sure that my friend's hard work could be recognized. Because what's the point of making movies if no one's going to see them?"

Congratulations to the Film and Media Studies students who had their films featured in the festival: **Martin Alvarez, Lloyd Ea, Adria Hernandez, Xueshi Li, Haoman Llu, Zihan "Johnson" Ling, Cameron Yen, Marden Angel, David Ochoa, Dylan Quintero**. To read more about Gary's experience, [click here to visit our website](#).

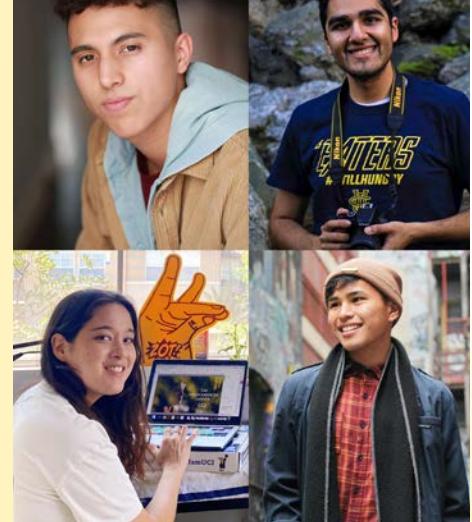
Third Annual Spotlight Showcase

During the Film and Media studies department annual screening series, eleven outstanding student films made during production courses were featured. These films addressed a multitude of subjects: from two aimless townies milling around town, a documentary focusing on UCI's student-run radio station, to a Chinese man realizing his failure as a father. Each film was deeply personal and artfully produced, displaying the diversity of ideas and backgrounds of the department. Director, writer, and producer **Roxy Shih** (class of 2010) was the alumni honoree. Being a highly decorated filmmaker, Roxy is best known for her work on the Amazon Prime series *Dark/ Web* (2019) and the feature film *Painkillers* (2018). Roxy's short film *The Visit* (2018) was screened, telling the story of a pregnant woman visiting her aging grandmother in the rural mountains of Taiwan witnessing the older woman's disappearance through the will of a malevolent mountain spirit.



Congratulation to all eleven student films shown during this year's Spotlight Showcase event: **Alyssa Deocampo** (*Mahal Marie*), **Tomás Berrio Gomez Lobo** (*Where the Sound Comes From*), **Ginny Huang** (*Sabrina's Art*), **Thoren Jorgensen** (*New Year New Day*), **Xueshi Li** (*To Attend My Son's Wedding*), **Zihan "Johnson" Ling** (*If Only*), **Madison McKenzie** (*Odd*), **Dylan Quintero** (*Carne*), **Jiale Wang** (*Numbers Matter*), **Paxton Wright** (*Clams on a Half Shell*), and **Diego Zavala** (*Sense of Sound*).

2020 Summer Internship Award



Congratulations to the four recipients of the 2020 Film and Media Studies Summer Internship Award: **Victor Adame-Ramirez, Shaun Chatrath, Ingrid Allen, and Allan Dizon**.

Victor interned at The Actor's Studio of Orange County in Santa Ana as a Production Assistant Intern, spending the summer communicating with industry professionals such as talent agents and managers for an Advanced Acting Showcase. Shaun interned at the Newport Beach Film Festival, adapting quickly to ever shifting situations during his daily tasks of taking notes at the executive meetings, graphic design, and copywriting. Ingrid interned at Optimist Films, creating over 50 partnership press kits using Adobe Illustrator and her editing skills when working closely with the social media team. Allan worked for Kofax as their video producer and editing intern, creating content concerned with technology pitches, platform releases, and various marketing endeavors.

This scholarship is funded by a generous donation from UCI History alumnus, **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 including *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

Sahar Jahani | Class of 2013

Sahar is a first generation Iranian-American writer/director raised in Los Angeles. Jahani worked in scripted development at YouTube Originals before transitioning to the writers room on the Hulu series *Ramy*. In 2018, she was selected to participate in the Film Independent Project Involve Program where she wrote and directed *Just One Night*, a short film that premiered at the LA Film Festival. Her original pilot, *Uncovered*, was awarded the 2019 MACRO Episodic Lab Grant and is in development with Executive Producer Eva Longoria. Jahani is currently a staff writer on *13 Reasons Why* and is adapting the novel, *Ayesha at Last*, for Pascal Pictures. She recently visited our Introduction to Development course to share her experiences with the next generation of filmmakers.



Jess dela Merced | Class of 2009

Jess is a Filipino American writer/director from San Francisco. She is a director in the Disney ABC directing program and one of *Filmmaker Magazine's* 25 New Faces of Independent Film. She holds a MFA from the NYU Grad Film Program, where she received the Spike Lee Fellowship as well as the Lorraine Hansberry Arts, Performance, and Media Award. Her short film, *Wait 'til the Wolves Make Nice*, which acts as a prelude to her first feature in development *CHICKENSHIT*, premiered at SXSW and won the Grand Jury Prize in Detroit's Cinetopia International Film Festival. The feature script *CHICKENSHIT* is a winner of NYU's 2016 Purple List, a San Francisco Film Society grant recipient, and a Hamptons Screenwriters Lab participant. She recently wrote and directed *PHONY*, a new short film executive produced by Paul Feig and crewed by UCI FMS Alumni.



Genevieve Clutario | Class of 2004

Receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois, Genevieve is now an Assistant Professor of American Studies at Wellesley College. Genevieve specializes in interdisciplinary and transnational feminist approaches to gender, race, and colonialism particularly in relation to Filipino diasporic histories. She is currently writing her first book, *Beauty Regimes: Modern Imperialism, the Philippines and the Gendered Labor of Appearance*, which analyzes how colonial and nationalist projects used fashion, beauty regimens, and public spectacles to police Filipino women's bodies, while Filipino women used these same arenas to negotiate their own definitions of modernity, citizenship, and nation.

Timothy Holland | Class of 2003

Timothy earned his PhD in critical studies with a minor in comparative literature from the University of Southern California, and has been an Assistant Professor at Emory University's Department of Film and Media Studies since 2017. Timothy's courses revolve around film and media theory, French culture and cinema, philosophical approaches to film and media, and the history of world cinema. Timothy is currently completing a monograph that investigates the overlooked role of cinema in Jacques Derrida's oeuvre, as well as the timeliness of deconstruction for contemporary film and media studies.

Patty Ahn | Class of 2002

Patty earned their Ph.D. in Critical Studies from the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, and is now an Assistant Teaching Professor at UC San Diego's Department of Communication. Patty's area of research include Asian/Asian American studies; contemporary Korean and Korean American political economic and cultural history; postcolonial and feminist theory; cultural theories of global media with an emphasis on hallyu (the Korean Wave); and digital storytelling and transmedia activism. Dr. Ahn's current project engages in an interdisciplinary study of the political economy and visual politics of South Korea's pop music export industry, or K-Pop. They focus on how the global marketing of Korean idol and and idol groups is reshaping cultural imaginaries about Korea in the post-millennium.



Faculty Achievements

The animated short film by Professor **Fatimah Tobing Rony**, "Annah la Javaise," has been named an official selection for the Annecy International Animation Festival, considered to be the top animation festival in the world. The film was made in Indonesia with Ariel Victor, an animator, and Aghi Narottama, a film music composer in Indonesia. The film reimagines the story of 13-year-old Annah who became French painter Paul Gauguin's maid and model in 1893. [Click here to view the film's trailer!](#)

Professor **Bo Ruberg's** new book *The Queer Games Avant-Garde: How LGBTQ GameMakers are Reimagining the Medium of Video Games*, was recently published by Duke University Press, presenting interviews with twenty-two queer video game developers whose experimental and deeply queer work is driving a shift in video games. In addition Professor Ruberg published an article in *Communication, Culture, and Critique* (March 2020) titled "Empathy and Its Alternatives: Deconstructing the Rhetoric of "Empathy in Video Games."

Congratulations to Professor **Victoria Johnson** for her new article, "Sporting Community: Activist and Responsibility in Turbulent Times," for the special 20th Anniversary Issue of *Television and New Media*. The article addresses the "expectations for athletes to both stand in for entire populations' political voice and to "shut up and dribble", examining the LeBron Family Foundation's actions as examples of "the increased expectation that sport/media icons are now obligated to remedy state failings through their charitable endeavors."

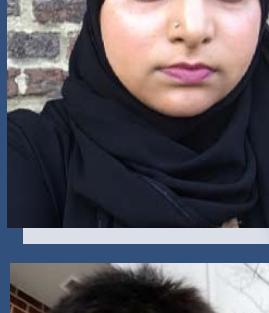
Peter Krapp, Professor of film and media studies and informatics, has been named a senior fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study on Media Cultures of Computer Simulation, a major research initiative funded by the German Federal Research Foundation. He is one of two senior fellows in residence winter 2019-2020 at Leuphana University Lüneburg in Germany. Peter was also recently interviewed by Tyrus Miller, Dean of the School of Humanities, in the COVID-19: The Humanities Respond video series. [Click here to watch the episode of Humanities Respond](#).

Help Us Welcome Our New Staff and Faculty!



AJ Lipscomb

AJ Lipscomb graduated from Illinois State University with a Mass Communications (TV & Radio Production) and Public Relations degree, working at a NPR radio station as an assistant producer and engineer for 4 years. She went into the United States Marine Corps after graduation and received an assignment with the Far East Network, providing tv programming to military bases in Okinawa, Japan. She has worked in the cable industry as a Programming and Community Relations Manager and as a Program Specialist for the Girl Scout Council of Orange County. AJ was a temp at UCI and joined the SOH in 2019 as the Finance and Events Assistant for Film and Media Studies, Art History, and Visual Studies.



Meryem Kamil

Dr. Meryem Kamil earned her Ph.D. from the Department of American Culture at the University of Michigan. She held the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of California, San Diego from 2019-2020 in the Ethnic Studies Department, also her undergraduate alma mater. Her research interests include new media, postcolonial studies, and Palestine studies. She is a member of Precarity Lab, a cross-disciplinary research collective that studies various forms of insecurity, vulnerability, and social and cultural exclusion that digital platforms produce, and a co-author of *Technoprecarious* (Goldsmiths Press, November 2020).



Keiji Kunigami

Dr. André Keiji Kunigami comes to UCI's Department of Film and Media Studies from UNC-Chapel Hill, where he was a Carolina Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Romance Studies. Kunigami has also taught film history at the Fluminense Federal University in Brazil, and he has been a researcher at PUC-RJ, in Rio de Janeiro, and a Japan Foundation Fellow at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo. He was born and raised in Brazil, where he earned his B.A. in communication from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and his M.A. in communication from the Fluminense Federal University. He earned his Ph.D. in Asian studies from Cornell University, where he also specialized in Luso-Brazilian studies and film and video studies.



Bo Ruberg

Dr. Bonnie "Bo" Ruberg, is an assistant professor of Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Their research explores gender and sexuality in digital media and digital cultures with a focus on queerness and video games. They are the author of *The Queer Games Avant-Garde* (2020, Duke University Press) and *Video Games Have Always Been Queer* (2019, New York University Press) and the co-editor of *Queer Game Studies* (2017, University of Minnesota Press). Ruberg is also the co-founder and co-organizer of the annual Queerness and Games Conference. They received their Ph.D. with certification in New Media and Gender and Sexuality Studies from the University of California, Berkeley and served as a Provost's Postdoctoral Fellow in the Interactive Media and Games Division at the University of Southern California.